The Last Great

ASSIZE:

OR,

Day of Judgment;

On which
All must give a General Account of their Actions before Almighty God.

BEING
Four SERMONS preached upon the 20th Chapter of the *Revelations*: Exactly shewing the Blessed STATE of the Righteous, and the Dreadful CONDITION of the Wicked.

To which is added,
Two SERMONS upon the 1st Chapter of the *Canticles*, v. 6, 7.

By SAMPSON SMITH, *B. D.*

The Fourth Edition.

Eccles. xi. 9. *Rejoyce, O young Man, in thy Youth, and let thy Heart cheer thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the Ways of thy Heart, and in the Sight of thine Eyes: But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into Judgment.*

London: Printed for *J. Gwillim*, in *Bishopsgate-street*.

BRITISH
MUSEUM

TO THE
Christian Reader,

Grace and *Peace* from Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gentle Reader,

I *Here expose to your View my Fourth Labour or Fruit of my Ministery, in which I have not been wanting, but endeavoured, what in me lay, for the Good of all my Hearers, and especially those of my own Congregation, whom I desire to take a second Notice of this my Dilligence, for the Good of their Souls, in seriously Reading over these Exercises that were delivered to them in the open Assembly. And seeing the* Night cometh when no Man can Work, *it is very behoveful to all, both People and Minister, to esteem their time as the most valuable Thing in the World, and more especially considering we know not how short a Time it will be e're we are summoned to give an Account of our Works; for certain it is, many have had good Intentions and Purposes*

to come close unto God, but yet all these have been hindred by Death, and they missed of a timely Repentance. Let us then by no means delay, or put off our turning to the Lord, but be Wise in Agreeing with our Adversary whilst we are in the Way with him: *For if Death step in before, and make an Arrest, we shall be constrained to pay the utmost Farthing.*

Let this Work then be as a Remembrancer to all that read it, that they may be more careful in the Performance of that Duty which so nearly concerns every one, so that one Day we may give up a good Account of our Works.

If any Benefit be obtained hereby, let the Praise be given to God alone, From whom every good and perfect Work proceedeth. For God is a Spirit, and they that Worship him, must Worship him in Spirit and in Truth. *As for my self, all my Desire is that you would help me in your Prayers, which I shall take as a full Recompence for the Hours I have spent in thus Labouring for your Good: and remain,*

Thine, in the Lord
Jesus Christ,

Sampson Smith.

The

The Last Great ASSIZE.

The First SERMON.

Rev. xx. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

11. *And I saw a great white Throne, and him that sat on it, from whose Face fled away both the Earth and Heaven, and their place was no more found.*

12. *And I saw the Dead, both small and great, stand before God, and the Books were opened: And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life: And the Dead were judged out of those things, which were written in the Books, according to their Deeds.*

13. *And the Sea gave up her Dead which were in her, and Death, and Hell delivered up the Dead that were in them: And they were judged every Man according to his Deeds.*

14. *And Death and Hell were cast into the Lake of Fire; this is the second Death.*

15. *And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life, was cast into the Lake of Fire.*

HAving deliver'd to you the undeniable Truth of Christ's coming in the Flesh, or into his Garden, which is the Church, and of his Kingly Offers unto us; yet sewing as it were in a mean and lowly

Estate, that we should entertain him, and receive the Pledges of his ineffable Love at his first coming to visit frail Man, under the Shades of Sorrow, and in a Vale of Tears; so it will be no less, if not more Profitable to you, that I now press home to you the thoughts of his second coming in Glory to Judge the World; that the Terror of it may move those (who are not so sensibly affected with his first coming in meer Love and Compassion to us frail and miserable Creatures for our eternal good, if made use of, as the true design intended) to amazement and astonishment, which coming, tho' delay'd for a time that God in his eternal Wisdom has design'd, will yet be most certain, for according to what we find of it in his revealed Word, as an undoubted Verity, he who left the Bosom of Bliss in low Humility, to be a Saviour to whomsoever with a stedfast Faith beleives in him, will also come at the last Day to be an Impartial Judge that will have no Respect of Persons, but distribute Judgment in Righteousness to all indifferently; a Judge who is not to be corrupted or blinded that he may not impartially do Justice by any thing in Heaven or Earth, one whom

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ten thousand times ten thousand Worlds, with all their Riches and Glory, cannot pervert from the way of doing right to every one, according to their deeds done in the Flesh, whether they be good or evil.

To this end I have chosen suitable Scriptures to enforce my Argument with such agreeable Circumstances as carry the greatest weight imaginable along with them, to press an awful dread and fear on the Minds of those that are careless and negligent, in improving the precious Moments of this Life, on which depends an Eternity of Joys or Miseries, to the good of their Souls in the great and terrible day of the Lord; to those, I say, who sloathfully put far away this Day, saying, *Where are the signs of his coming?* When indeed, like watchful and diligent Servants, they should be up and doing, because they know not the Hour of the Lord's coming; for he shall come suddenly, as a Thief in the night, and then blessed are all those he shall find ready and prepared to meet him with cheerfulness as good and faithful Servants.

St. *John* saw this glorious coming, as you may find in the Text, tho' but in a Vision, yet it is expressed with such Awe and Ma-

jesty, tho' in a far lower degree, because Words are not capable to utter it, as then it will be manifested, when the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, attended with the heavenly Hosts to summons both the Quick and the Dead to his tremendous Tribunal; tho' in what the Evangelist has set down we may, in a great measure, frame in our minds the manner and order of it.

As for St. *John*, he was the beloved Disciple of our Lord, lay in his Bosom whilst on Earth, and was with him where-ever he went; stood by him when he was apprehended in the Garden, at the Judgment-seat of *Pilate*, and even at his Death on the Cross, and never left him till he saw him entomb'd; and after Preaching the Gospel was banished by *Domitian* the Persecuting Roman Emperor, to the desolate Island of *Patmos*, where, as a singular favour of Heaven, this glorious Vision of the last and great Day was reveal'd to him: And this may briefly suffice to shew you what this Writer of the *Revelations* was, out of which my Text is taken! as for the rest, you may read more at large in the New Testament, testifying him worthy of the Divine Favour, and his inspired Bosom, a fit

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Cabinet to receive these Holy Mysteries, and as an Oracle of Truth, to deliver them to the World.

As for the Person of the Judge, you find him described in Majesty, Power, Integrity, Sincerity, and Dread, at his coming to Judge the World, *Rev.* 20. 11.

Secondly, If we consider who are to be the Persons to appear before the Judge, and to be judged, the same Person who in his Vision saw the Judge, tell us, *He saw the Dead, both small and great, stand before God*; which comprehends all without distinction, which ever were of Mankind, or ever shall be, to the coming of this great Day; for from all the ends of the Earth shall they be gathered together at the sound of the last Trumpet on this great Day, to appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ.

Thirdly, In the next place, if we would know the manner how the Judge of all the Earth will proceed in the determin'd Judgment; let us be assured, it will be by our own Consciences, which will be both Jury and Witnesses to acquit or condemn us; for it is concluded on all hands, that the Book there mentioned to be opened, shall be no other than the Book of Conscience,

out of which we shall be judged as to the things that are found therein.

Fourthly, As to the Issue of this Judgment, it is plain that those whose Names are written in the Book of Life, shall be everlastingly happy, by being made to pass into Joys inexpressible, and those whose Sins have excluded them from that inestimable Benefit, shall go away into the everlasting Burnings, the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, there to remain with the apostate Angels, who kept not their first Covenant but fell, there to endure eternal Torments for evermore; which is the second Death.

Now as to these particulars, I shall come more precisely to treat of them to your Benefit and great Advantage, conducing to a happy future State, if good Heed and Attention be given to what I shall lay down; which God grant every one that hears may so do, and be blessed, by escaping the second Death, and entering into a Life, that shall never have end, wherein shall be no Sorrow or Mourning, as in this Vail of Trouble, this tempestuous Sea of the World, but all Tears shall be wiped away from our Eyes.

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St. *John* tells us, *He saw a great white Throne*, as appears by the beginning of the first Verse of the Text; this was a Preparatory to the Judgment, as a thing placed in order for the entertainment for accommodation of the Judge that sat on it; and this coming to Judgment, that it might not be hidden from us, St. *John* is commanded to record it in a Book, that we who profess our selves to be Membeas of the Church, of which Christ is the Head, might not be capable to plead Ignorance of knowing he assuredly will come, even before he comes, tho' his coming be not presently, but that we rather may, by having a true sense of his coming, work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling, that we may see him with Joy and not Grief, at his coming, and meet the Lord in the Clouds of Heaven: Nor can it be thought any other than a very necessary thing to know of Christ's coming to Judge the World; since on all hands it cannot but be concluded, that we are those on whom the ends of the World are come, seeing the Prophecies of the Old and New Testament concerning Christ's coming, are pointing at these latter times more directly than any heretofore.

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The Throne is as it were spread, and the awful Judge sitting on it, that is, God is stretching out his Arm over us with his Sword in his hand, and warning us to break off our Sin, and turn to him by a sincere Repentance, least we dye in them, and perish everlastingly; and tho' his hand may seem slow in executing, yet it will be sure at last to execute vengance upon all wicked and ungodly Sinners, who now put far from them the evil Day.

None of us can be so forgetful as not to remember our Saviour has told us, *That in the latter Days there shall be Differences and Dissentions amongst Nations; Wars abroad, and rumours of Wars at home; Signs in Heaven, and Earthquakes in divers places*; Nay, such Deceivers go abroad, that under fair and specious pretences of Zeal for Religion and new fangl'd Doctrine, they should deceive even the very Elect, were it possible; and what less than these have fallen out, even in our days? And what is all this but a Finger of God, pointing at the final Judgment, which how near it may be, none of us knows: How can any one be assured but when he lies down to Repose, the last Trumpet's Sound may awake him, and he start

start from his Bed to Judgment, thro' the Terror of the consuming Elements, that shall perish by a General Conflagation? What manner of Men then ought we to be in all Conversation of Life? What Preparedness ought we to be in; and how industrious to improve our high Calling, to lay up Treasure in Heaven that shall befriend us at need, when all these things shall pass away?

To put Men more continually in Mind of these things, we find the Doctrine of Judgment was one of the six Principles that were taught in the Primitive Christian Church, as one of the most necessary things a Christian ought to be made sensible of, and is as vehemently urged to our Consideration in the Old and New Testament; Nay, than the coming of Judgment, there is nothing more pressing and positively laid down to us. *Enoch*, the Seventh from *Adam*, as St. *Jude* tells us, prophecied the Lord's Descending from Heaven to Judgment, to take Vengeance on the wicked and ungodly Men. This is, or should be, a very terrible and awakening Doctrine to secure Souls, that lie drowsie, and as it were buried in their Sins.

Sins. It certainly must compel them to Reverence and Awe of that dreadful Majesty they must one Day appear before, to give an Account of their Actions, nay of their Words, even every idle Word that here passed by regardless and unheeded.

St. *Paul*, considering the Terrors of the Lord, 1 *Cor.* 3. 11. had a wonderful effect wrought upon him; it provoked him, and others, to Fear and Reverence of that dreadful Majesty that fills all Places and Things, and not only him alone, for when he preached to *Felix* the Governour, of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come, he trembled, as we find it *Acts* 24. *Habakkuk*, tho' a Prophet, and a very holy Man, when he heard of the Last Judgment, acknowledges his Fear in these Words, *viz. My Flesh trembled and my Lips shook, and Rottenness entred into my Bones*, Hab. 3. 6. And holy *David*, tho' a Man of an undaunted Spirit, had not Courage enough to bear him out in this; for he freely and plainly tells us of himself, speaking to God, *viz. My Flesh trembleth for fear of Thee; and I am afraid of thy Judgments*, Psal. 119. 10. *Noah* being warned of the Judgment, when God de-

design'd to destroy the World with Water, tho' a hundred and twenty Years distant, was obedient, and built the Ark to save himself and his Family from the threatned Vengance that was afterward poured down to the Destruction of the rest of Mankind, who in all that time would not Repent, but followed on their old course of Sinning, till the Flood came and swept them away.

This is certainly a very suitable Doctrine for us, to drive us from our Security, for as sure as God brought the Flood upon the old World, so shall he rain Fire upon the Wicked, in the terrible Day of his Wrath, when *the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat, the Earth be burnt up, the Sun turned into Darkness, the Moon into Blood, and the Stars fall from Heaven.*

The Scripture makes the ignorance, and want of due consideration of the Day of Judgment, the Ground whereon secure Sinners rest, and indeed of many sins which the Terrors of the Day of Judgment, rightly apply'd, would make them afraid to commit. Their not regarding of this makes them (as in the days of *Noah*) Eat and Drink, Marry and give in Marriage,

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Plant and Build, being careless of the Judgment that they knew not how nearly may be unto them; for so will many go on, as they of the old World, until the Day come upon them as a Snare, and then it will be in vain to make Excuses; or seek for Mountains, or Rocks, to shelter them from the Face of him that sits on the Throne. Our Saviour's Parable of the foolish Virgins, rightly hits upon this, and many others, as the evil Servant, who regardlesly continued eating, and drinking, and beating his Fellow-servant, not dreaming his Lord would so suddenly come and take him unawares. He put far away from him the Fear of Punishment, that came rowling on him like a Tempest, when he was the least prepared for it.

Ah! how should the Consideration of these things awaken us from our Lethargy of Sin; cause us to bestir our selves, to be up and doing, that we may not be surprized, and so utterly undone for ever! For who shall be able to abide his coming to Judgment, that is clog'd with a weight of Sin? And yet there is no remedy, all must appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, as well the Bad as the Good; there is no Shel-

Sheltering-place to be found from him whose Eyes run to and fro through the Earth, from him to whom Darkness is as Light. *Who*, says the Prophet, *can dwell with the everlasting Burnings?* And yet they must, whose Sins sink them into the bottomless Pit, where the Fire is unquenchable.

Let these things sink deep into the Hearts of e'ry one of us, and beget in us a reverence and awe of that Divine Majesty in whose Hands we are, and who has Power to do with us as the Potter with his Clay, to mould us to Honour, or to Dishonour, according as we shall take care to be serviceable or disserviceable to him here; for as we serve him, we serve our selves, either to Glory or Shame.

I now come to speak of two Things that are main Hindrances to God's People, from a serious thought of future Judgment, and a due preparation for it, of which I have already hinted some Instances, and now it remains to be more full and plain in the handling this matter:

First, A careless neglect of Duty, and a too secure puting off the so necessary Day of Account, flattering themselves they have

have yet time enough to make up their reckoning, and that the Master will not come, tho' we are assured the Day and Hour no Man knows, no, not the very Angels in Heaven, *&c.* of Christ's coming to Judgment. Therefore this we ought to know of a certain, That it is not so concealed, but to the intent it shall be Surprizing. However, I would have such as lay stress on this, so as to put off their repentance from day to day, flattering 'emselves they shall have time enough to do that great work which the whole business of a Life cannot perfect (as in strict Account it ought to be) consider whether they can assure themselves to live a Year, a Month, a Week, or a Day: Certainly no Man can, seeing all our Breath and Life is in the Hands of God, who can take it away in a Moment; and then where is that Time we have so frequently put off, and referred our selves to, for the great work of Repentance? We are surrounded with innumerable Accidents; Death meets us every-where, and is procur'd by every Instrument, and in all Chances, and enters in at many Doors by Violence and secret Influence, by the Aspect of a Star, or an infectious

fectious Vapour, by the fall of a Charriot, or the stumbling at a Stone, by a full Meal, or an empty Stomach, by Excess of Wine, or a Debauch, by the Moon or Sun, by Heat or Cold, by Sleeping Nights, or Sleeping Days, by Water frozen, or Thunder, or a Flood, by a Fly, a Hair, a Crumb of Bread, by a Fall of a Tile, by the Violence of a Beast, by every thing in Providence, and every thing in Manners, by every thing in Nature, and every thing in Change. There is no State, no Accident, no Circumstance of our Life, but hath been soured by some sad Instance of a dying Friend: A friendly Meeting often ends in sad Mischance, and makes an eternal Parting. The Son of *Syrac* tells us, *The Bride went into her Chamber, and knew not what would befal her there:* Many have died under the hands of their Paranymphs or Maids, in Dressing to their Nuptials; and so their Wedding-garments have been laid aside, to put on a Winding-shroud; and instead of a Nuptial Bed, they have lain down in the Silence of the Grave.

If these thing be true, as undoubtedly it so falls out to one or other every time the Sun circles the Earth, what Assurance can

can any one have of Life, that can set himself a time to repent, and prepare himself for the great and terrible Day of the Lord's coming? Nay, if that Day should be as remote as many fondly fancy, what avails it to these that dye before it comes, since Death to them is as much the End of the World, as if they had lived to see it? And as Death leaves us, so Judgment will find us: for there is no Repentance in the Grave, but as the Tree falls, so it must lie; there will be no augmenting, or decreasing, what is done in the Flesh must stand the Test at the last Day, and receive Rewards or Punishment, as the righteous Judge of all the Earth shall pronounce the Sentence in Uprightness and Truth. O remember the Fool in the Gospel, who, when he promis'd himself an Enlargement of his Barns, and bid his Soul take its rest, since there was Treasure stored up for it many Years, but indeed his Soul was frustrated of all its expected Felicity, by being taken from him that very Night. So it may be with every one that promises to himself a Time that is beyond his Power to command: *Therefore whilst it is called to Day, let us hear his Voice*, who calls upon us to Repent,

pent, for who can tell what a Day may bring forth? Let us be up and doing, whilst we have the Light of Life shining in our Faces, least the Night of Death steal upon us, wherein no Man can work: Let us not so much as dare to imagine if our Life be prolonged, that we have any idle Time purposely allowed us to squander away, but that every moment is given us to barter for a blessed Eternity; and if we do not wisely improve our Tallent we shall come short of the expected Reward of good Servants.

Secondly, There is another Hinderance to keep Men from fixing their Minds on the Judgment to come, and that is *the Cares of this Life*, that swallows them up in the Hurry and Business of the World; they are so affected with their present Felicity, that they think the Account they must give of their Actions, a too melancholy Thought, troublesome and uneasie, as not suiting with their jolly Complexion. When, did they consider that they stand continually tottering on the Brink of the Grave, they would husband their Time to a better end, and lay up for themselves Riches that can never fail them, but will

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be a Joy and Comfort to them at their greatest need: They would then part with all the trifling Vanities this World can afford, to purchase the Pearl of great Price, which, when those make to themselves Wings and fly away, leaving us comfortless and forlorn, will be of unestimable Value to us, in a Life of Pleasure, Plenty and everlasting Peace, to which the Comforts of this Life, tho' attended with all the Pomps, State, and Glories of the Earth, is but like a dying Sparkle, compared with the Radiancy of the Sun: Besides, if we rightly consider, whatever we can dote on in this sublunary World, are fading and perishing, before we can understand we have enjoyed them. All we can prize then in this Life, is a Quietness of Mind and good Conscience; to walk here as *Enoch* did, not regagding the World, and wholly relying upon the divine Goodness for all outward things, who is Munificent in distributing to the Wants of all so far as he sees it necessary for them, and what is beyond that, is neither profitable nor pleasant.

The ancient Philosophers, and all good Christians, have made it their care not to

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Cark for the Things of this World, accounting them unworthy of a brave Soul, any further than what was meerly necessary for the Support of Life: for the Things of this Word are like the Manna in the Wilderness, those that gather most shall in the true Sense enjoy no more than those that gather little; and therefore to use Things as not abusing them is the best Expedient; for here at best we are but Pilgrims and Strangers, travelling thro' a Wilderness to a Land that flows with Milk and Honey, the *Heavenly Canaan*, the *New Jerusalem*; so that we should only Bait, and keep on our Journey, without indulging our sensual Pleasure that should stay us from the City we are going to, built without Hands, in the highest Heavens: Good Men, we find in Scripture, have hastened thither by God's especial Blessing, in timely taking them away from the Evil to come, to possess the Joy their Souls panted after; whilst others, more unhappy, who lingred to enjoy the Things of this World, have at last been forc'd from the One, but never attained the Other; by which we may perceive, that covetous Carnal-mindedness is so far at Enmity

with God, that fixes an impassable Gulph between him and such as fondly are carried away with the Cares of this Life.

But to come somewhat nearer to the Text, *I saw*, says St. *John*, *a great white Throne.* In this two Things may well be considered, As *First*, A great white Throne shews God's Might, Majesty and Power to judge the World. *Secondly*, A white Throne is the Emblem of the Purity, Integrity and Uprightness of him that sat on it to give Judgment.

This will be answerable in all Points when Christ at his second Coming shall sit on the Throne of his Glory, as we find it, *Acts* 25. viz. *And then shall we see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds, with Power and great Glory*, attended with Angels, Patriarchs, Prophets, Martyrs and all the Cœlestial Choire and Harmony of Heaven, and yet not without Terror and Astonishment to those that shall be changed, or arise from their Graves to behold it, till he shall give Comfort and Joy to those that are to pass with him unto eternal Life; but to those whom he shall for ever banish from his amicable Presence, it will prove altogether a Day of

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Terror, Gloominess and Darkness, for upon them that despised him he shall get himself a Name, greater then he did upon *Pharoah* and his Host; who now perceiving his Countenance too severe to be beheld, shall in vain call to the Mountains to fall on them, and the Hills to cover them from his angry Presence, to whom all things lye open and naked, and against whose Power all Resistance and Might of Arm is feeble and as nothing.

For his Herald he will have an Arch-Angel, sounding the last Trumpet, to proclaim his being on the Throne, to Judge the Quick and the Dead, and the Grave and Hell, and the Sea shall give up their Dead, not one shall remain behind at this General Summons, but all shall arise and come to Judgment; yea, so great shall be his Glory at this his second Coming, that even the very Heavens shall be shaken, and pass away with a Noise, and the very Elements shall melt with fervent Heat.

To this Glory all the Glories of the earthly Princes, and their pompous State, shall be nothing comparable; for here will be an Excellency of inexpressible Glory and

Majesty in this great Judge that no mortal Eye ever beheld, so that all the cited World shall stand with Wonder and Amazement to behold it.

Now the Use we ought to make of this, is seriously to meditate on the Difference between Christ's coming in the Flesh, when he took humane Nature upon him, to be a merciful Mediator and Redeemer, and his second Coming to Judge those he dyed for.

His first Coming was in Love, Meekness and great Humility, for having laid aside his Diadem of Stars, and left his Palace of Glory, he so lowly submitted to be born in a Stable, and laid in a Manger between two Beasts, who was at once both King of Heaven and Earth; and when he grew up, himself declar'd, *That the Foxes had Holes, and the Birds had Nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his Head.* As he was the Son of Man he shewed this Meekness, and his Love and Humility were sufficiently expressed in the Sufferings and Poverty he underwent for us, enduring for our Sins all our Infirmities, Sin only excepted; and that he might save us from eternal Death, he became acquainted

ted with Grief and Sorrow, and at last, after many Scorns and Derisions put upon him, shed his Rich Redeeming Blood, that we might be purged from Sin, and reconciled to his offended Father. How shall we dare then to make slight of so great a Mercy, that none in Heaven nor Earth beside him could procure for us? The Jews indeed thought once Crucifying him was sufficient Affliction, but we Wicked Wretches, who own his Name, and stile our selves Christians, professing to fight under his Banner, by our repeated Sins, often too daringly and uncharitably Crucify him afresh, and put him to an open Shame, Trampling under foot the precious Blood of the Covenant, that so kindly speaks for us better things than that of *Abel*. What then shall we expect at his second Coming, but fiery Wrath and Indignation in the Uprightness of his Judgment upon all ungodly Sinners?

Therefore, whilst it is yet Day, and some time is allowed to us, for us to prevent the threatned Woes and Miseries denounced against such Offenders, let 'em, and even all of us, fly to the Arms of our merciful Mediator, whose Love has been

so boundless towards us, whilst he stretches them out to receive the returning Prodigals, upon their sincere and hearty Repentance and Amendment of Life for the future, which we may do with the more Confidence, because himself hath called and invited us, with a *Come all ye that Labour and are heavy Laden, and I will give you rest for your Souls.* He in his Transcendant Compassion towards us, offers the Water of Life freely, without Price or Money, and assures us that there is no such difficulty as some imagine in attaining it, by telling us, *His Yoak is easy, and his Burthen light.*

Let us therefore implore him with holy *David*, that by the Motions of the holy Spirit he would give us newness of Life, by creating a clean Heart, and renewing a right Spirit within us, *Psal.* 15. For if we are willing, he is altogether able to help us in our greatest Despondencies, even to draw us out of the Mire and Sink of Sin, and lead us into pleasant Pastures making us to lye down in Safety, that so we may appear blameless and spotless before God, cloathed with the Robes of Christ's Righteousness; and then he will be

be pleased with us, and accept us in that Garment; for he plainly tells us, *He delights not in the Death of a Sinner, but desires that he be converted and live.* And to that End he expressed a boundless Love, in sending his only begotten Son to die for us, that we might not die eternally, and he is become the Mediator between God and Man, pleading a Reconciliation for us, as *Moses* and *Aaron* pleaded with God for the Children of *Israel*, that he would not destroy them; and as *Moses* led them thro' the *Red-sea* to *Canaan*, so does Christ us, if we hearken and are obedient to his Voice, thro' the Red-sea of his Blood, to a better and more happy Land, even to the Heavenly *Canaan*, the new *Jerusalem* shining with the Brightness of God's Presence, where is Fulness of Joy for evermore.

Let none therefore despair of Mercy, tho' a very grievous Sinner, if in Time he amend and close with Christ on his Terms held forth in the Gospel; for to this End he hath taken our very Substance and exalted it above the Heavens, he hath seated it in the Kingdom and Glory of his Father; in him we have a Portion of

Flesh and Blood, in him a Part of our selves is already glorified, and as we may not doubt of this his Communion with us in Nature, so we ought not in the least to mistrust of our Participation both here of his Grace, and hereafter of his Glory; for though we are sinful, yet is he not so unnatural, that he either can forget, or will forsake his own Members, if they cleave unto him their Head in Uprightness and Sincerity; and if we do not, the greater will be our Condemnation, because it comes of our selves, being obstinately bent on our own Destruction; and so we shall find it when the Lord cometh to judge the World in Righteousness and Truth; for as he is now Merciful in delaying, to give us Time to repent, so then coming in Power and great Glory to take Vengeance, he will impartially execute Justice on us, for not using the Opportunities his Patience and long Sufferance has allowed us to repent in, and for all the Abusses we have put upon his Mercy: But to come yet closer,

St. *John* tell us, he saw *a white Throne and One sitting thereon.* I have already hinted to you what is signified by this white Throne,

Throne, as Beauty, Purity, Sincerity, Integrity, &c. from which you may truly infer, that Christ the Judge of the World, will not fail to judge all Causes, and all Persons uprightly, sincerely, and with Impartial Justice; no Cruelty, Injustice, or Wrong will be done to any one, as it often happens in this World, where Justice is many times doubtfully administred, and often fails of its end, because Man can discern no farther then the outward appearance of things: But this Judge searcheth the Heart, and trieth the Reins; he knows all our secret Thoughts, and if that were not, there needs no more than our own Consciences to lay all open and naked before him; when, as *Solomon* saith, *Every Secret thing shall be brought into Judgment, and when he shall lighten all things that are hid in Darkness, and make the Counsils of their Hearts manifest*, Eccles. 1. 2. Awarding upon his plain Discovery to every one, according to their Works. Then Woe be to those whose Guilt shall not only be Exposed to the Censure of the Judge, but to all the Angels and Saints attending him, which must needs cause Shame, Horror and Confusion of Face,

in such who on Earth found many Fig-leave Coverings to hide that Nakedness from Men, that must there appear Unveil'd, Unmask'd, and stand the terrible Sentence of God, *Go ye Cursed*, &c. having none to appeal to from it, in Heaven, or Earth; so that then they will find the Words of *Solomon* too sadly true, who saith, *The Wicked make a deceitful Work*, Prov. 11. 8.

It is indeed a great deceiving to those, who fondly and vainly imagine that tho' in this Life, they live after the Flesh, yet they shall prosper in the day of the Lord. That they may sow Iniquity, and yet look to reap the Reward of Righteousness. That Men may despise God's Grace and Bounty which he bestows on them in this World; yet look to taste his Mercy and Goodness after they are gone out of it; That they may all their Life long walk in the broad way that leads to Destruction, and yet at last arrive at the happy Heaven of Blessedness, which is a meer Contradiction in it self, would they rightly consider their Error. Seeing it is a most sure grounded Truth of the Apostle, *That he who soweth to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption? But he that Sow-*

Soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life Everlasting. And that without Holiness, no Man shall see God, Gal. 6. Heb. 12. 14.

Therefore it is the best Advice that can be given you to prevent this being deceived, *To seek the Lord whilst he may be found, to call upon him while he is near*, Isa. 45.

In our Life-time indeed we have a very favourable Blessing, that Christ vouchsafes to come to his unworthy Servants, not out of any Merit of our own, but out of his meer Compassion to our Infirmities. He cometh to us by the sweet Workings of the Holy Spirit, and by his Ministers, as a Saviour to save our Souls, and in mercy to bring us to Repentance, he offers his free Grace to all, he tells us by his Prophet *Isaiah*, *He will pour out his Spirit upon us*, Isa. 14. And if we obstinately refuse to prepare Vessels of Faith to receive this Spirit, which will make us wise unto everlasting Life, it will instead of doing us good, prove a condemning Witness against us at the last Day, nor at all strive with us after Death to make us Happy, for in the Grave there is no Remembrance of God, available to Repentance.

This is seen by the sad Instance of the Rich

Rich Man, who by his Sins had placed an impassable Gulf between him and *Abraham*. His Repentance signified nothing, tho' past doubt, he was then Sorrowful, not only for the dreadful Condition he lay weltering in, but more for the Deprivation of that blessed State that he saw *Lazarus* in; which himself, by his Sins and inordinate Living, had foolishly lost: Then, no doubt, he would have given all he had enjoyed on Earth, and much more were it in his Power for the Exchange, could it have been possible: But alas! It was too late. Nor could he obtain his other Petition, of sending *Lazarus* to his Brethren, to save them by a timely Warning from so dismal a Doom: However, the Means were appointed to them that must be our Help in our Life-time, to gain us Mercy and Favour with God, *viz.* The good Instruction of *Moses* and the Prophets; nay, we have a greater Blessing to help us forward, even Christ himself is our Guide and Instructor in the Paths that lead to Life eternal. *They have*, says *Abraham*, Moses *and the Prophets. If they will not hear them nor believe them, they will not, though One come from the Dead to admonish them, leave those wicked Courses*

that

that in all likelihood would bring them to the same Place of Torment. Therefore it is highly necessary for the Salvation of our Souls, whilst the Opportunity is put into our Hands, that we make effectual Use of all the good Instructions we can, and employ every wholesome Doctrine to the best Advantage, to render us acceptable in the Day of the Lord Jesus.

Having thus far discoursed of the Throne, I come now more particularly to speak of the Judge, tho' I have indeed given a considerable Light already into this Mistery; yet St. *John* speaks more plainly, when in another Place he says, *I saw a white Cloud, and One sitting on it like the Son of Man, having on his Head a Crown of Gold, and in his Hand a Sickle*, Rev. 14. 14. And this alludes to the Throne, as being One and the same Person who sat on either, viz, *Christ Jesus, God and Man, our Saviour and Judge*; and St. *Matthew* is yet more plain, beyond all Scruple, telling us, *When the Son of Man cometh in his Glory, and his holy Angels with him; then shall he sit upon the Throne of his Glory*, Mat. 25. 31. And Verse 24. he is entituled by the Name of King, *viz.* Then shall the King say unto them

them on the Right Hand, *Come ye Blessed of my Father*, &c. And St. *Paul* tells us, *We must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ*, 1 Cor. v. 10. And St. *John* viz. *The Father Judgeth no Man, but committeth all Judgment to the Son*, John v. 22. And tho' Saints are in some Case said to Judge the World at the last Day, the Apostles Sense is, that they being present, shall approve and applaud the righteous Judgment of Christ, and as Assessors give their Consent to it, Triumphing that his and their Enemies are put under his Feet, to whom all Power is given in Heaven and in Earth.

Christ has a Right to be Judge in several Respects: As *First*, Being the Redeemer of the World, and suffering himself the Judgment of the World.

Secondly, In regard to his Church, of which he is the Head, he ought to have that Jurisdiction over his Members, as a King has over his Subjects, to judge their Cause, acquitting the Just, and punishing the Unjust; so that as his Humility has been visible, his Power and Glory may in the like Manner appear at his second Coming as a King and Judge.

Again,

Again, This Power is Exerted to accompliſh his Kingly Office, before he delivers up the Kingdom given him, to God the Father; for having led and fed his Flock, like a Shepherd thro' the Wilderneſs of this World, he will not leave them till he ſees them in Safety, in the promiſed Land, where they ſhall be united to him, and he in a degree become one with them, when God ſhall be all in all; and till this time he muſt Reign as a King, and not reſign his Power, till after he has paſſed Judgment on all the Summoned World, even the Dead both ſmall and great, all Generations that ever were, or ſhall be to the end of the World.

It is true, Chriſt by his Office is a Prieſt and a Prophet as well as a King; a True High Prieſt, who offer'd up himſelf a Propitiatory Sacrifice for Mankind's Redemption, and found himſelf acceptable therein to God the Father, as an Attonement for the Sins of the whole World; a true Prophet, in whom was contain'd all the Secrets and whole Council of God; but when as a King he comes to ſit on the Throne of Majeſty, to judge the Quick and the Dead; then theſe Offices ſhall be finiſhed, he

be having accomplish'd the end of our Redemption, as Propher, by revealing the Mysteries of God to his Church as a Priest, by having finished the Sacrifice in offering up himself, which shall be no more repeated: But now appearing in his Kingly Office, with Power and Majesty, he shall Manifest himself to Men and Angels, to be a King of all Nations, People and Languages, who shall bow down before him, and Worship him, even a King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, full of Divine and Celestial Glory; and those that reviled him, scourged him, and Crucified him in his Low Humility, shall now tremble at the Presence of his Majesty, and be astonished with Amazement at the *Terror of his Anger.*

Therefore now in this our Day, let us Kiss the Son least he be angry, and we perish in the way; for if his Wrath be but a little kindled in his Breast, Blessed are all they that trust in him, least we hear the fearful Sentence sounding in our Ears at this dreadful Day, of *Go ye Cursed into Everlasting Fire,* &c.

That Christ is to be the Judge of the World, as it may add Terror to the wicked, that have despised and rejected him,

and

and his Councils; so it cannot but administer Matter of Comfort to those, that have led godly Lives, since one throughly acquainted with their Griefs and Sorrows, is now to judge them in Truth and Uprightness. Let all the People of God draw Comfort and Consolation then from this, that he who has called himself their Brother, and is their Redeemer and Mediator, is to be their Judge; so that none but those who have persecuted him in his Members, or wounded him with their wilful Sinning against the Light of Grace, and all their favourable Offers and Opportunities, need be afraid of his Judgment: For tho' it may in some Sense carry with it Terror, Trembling and Fear, thro' Awfulness of it, yet he will bring with him such Comforts and Consolations to support the Good, that they shall not be dismaied, tho' the World be flaming beneath, and the Sky flashing Fire above, since their God is on their Right Hand, that they shall not be moved. However, I must proceed in the next Place to set down somewhat more of the Terror of this great Day, at which the Wicked must certainly tremble; for after St. *John* in a Vision had

seen

seen what is already related, he proceeds as followeth,

From whose Face (meaning the Judge that sat upon the white Throne) *fled away both the Earth and the Heavens, and their Place was no more found.* We read indeed that the Heavens are not pure in his Sight; how much less than is the Earth polluted and defiled by the Sins of Man, for whose sake, even it was cursed of God, upon the first Transgression in Paradise? We cannot wonder then they should fly at his Presence, who is Purity it self, and delights in no impure Thing.

But this is here mention'd the rather to express the Severity, and Terror of the Judge, taken in a strict Sense, that Things insensible give Place when his Anger is kindled against sinful Man, whose Sins have polluted them; we find, to confirm this in some Degree, that when God descended in a far less Terror on Mount *Sinai* to give the Law, even the Mountain quak'd and trembl'd exceedingly; and at other Times we find the Rocks rent before him, as he passed by, and the Hills were moved at his Presence: And even this great Judge in the day of his Humility, dying on the Cross

Cross shook the Foundations of the Earth, Rent the Rock, Tore the Veil of the Temple, Darkened the Suns Glorious Light, and caused the Saints to arise from their Graves, and appear unto many; so that even Heaven and Earth Trembled then before him, when he appeared to Senseless Men to have no Power: What greater things must then necessarily come to pass, when he appears in all Power, and Might, and Glory, able at one Blow to dash the whole Creation in Pieces; sure then it is no wonder if the Affrighted Elements fly and give place to the Terror of his Judgment, since the Sin of Man has scattered an Infection and Contagion over the whole Visible Creation.

If then such a Terror at his Approach, be struck into Creatures that appear to us void of Sense, as to make them fly from before the Face of their Creator; What can Sinful Man think of himself, who may conclude him far less able to endure in this great and terrible Day of the Lord's Coming, who tho' he would perhaps be glad, as these Elements to fly away; yet is not able to do it, as being fixed by the Power of the great Judge, and capable of shunning

shunning his Tremendous Presence, till he has receiv'd the Doom, that now perhaps he imagines at so great a distance from him, as to think it will never be, or makes a light regard of it, fancying it, as indeed too many in our days do, a Fable invented by Preachers to keep Men in Awe, and Serve their own Turns and Advantages of their Causeless Fears, tho' all good Men stand in awe of this great Day, tho' they have far less Occasion for it; but rather to look up because their Redemption draws nigh. This latter was the Case of the Royal Psalmist, when he said, *I have Feared thy Judgments, thy Judgments are always in my Sight*, Psal. 11. 2, and indeed unless we are suitably prepar'd, *it is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God*, seeing he is a consuming Fire to the Wicked, yet so merciful is he, that he always gives warning before he strikes, neither does he willingly afflict or grieve the Children of Men. The *Ninevites* we find experienc'd his Mercy, in the warning he gave, which indue'd 'em to a strict Repentance: And O that we might be like them in this, not to deny Christ Entrance when he stands at the Gates of our Hearts and

Knocks,

Knocks, but open to him, least he be angry, and turn away his amicable Countenance from us, presenting that of Severity and Wrath in the last Day; and then we shall be the most miserable of all Creatures.

Let not the Cares of the World then choke us, to dream away our Lives, nor Forgetfulness blot out of our Remembrance, that we have no assurance of Happiness but by Repentance; for it is the Expression of our Saviour himself, *That unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* The Psalmist very well minds us of the Terror of this Day, when he says, *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a Fire shall devour before him, and a mighty Tempest shall be moved round about him.* Psalm 50. 3. And again, as expressly St. *Paul* says, *He shall come in a Flame of Fire, rendring Vengeance,* &c. 2 Thes. 1. 3. And *Daniel* says, *Many of them that slept in the Dust shall awake,* &c. Dan. 12. 1. Some to shame and perpetual Contempt, by a full discovery of all the Evils they have been guilty of; these Things hast thou done, &c. Psal. 50. 2. *By the Pain and distracting Horror, they undergo Tribulation, Anguish and*

Hor-

Horror shall be upon every Soul that doth Evil, Rom. II. 5. *by the Company they shall be forced to take up with*, viz. *Even the Devil and his Angels*, Mat. XXV. And indeed all things shall be horrible about them, and to them on that day, and after to all Eternity, in Torments without Limit or End.

The next thing to be considered is, who are they that shall come to this great Tribunal? Why truly St. *John* tells us, in the same Vision, *He saw the Dead both small and great, stand before God*; That is, all shall be gathered from the four Winds, even all that ever shall have been to that Day, from the beginning of the World, for in this Latitude are all comprehended, not those that shall be found actually dead, and raised at that Day, but even the Living that then should be found, but changed, which signifies a dying in the Sense of St. *Paul*, where this manner of change is as it were a sudden Death, immediately to pass to Life again, by putting off Mortality to put on Immortality and dye no more; or how can it be said, *It is appointed once for all Men to Dye, and after that to come to Judgment?* Tho' in another place, the quick are mentioned as well as the dead; that is, they shall

shall not come into the Chambers of the Grave, nor moulder to Dust as the other were before they were raised at the Sound of the last Trumpet. However to wave too nice Distinctions in this Matter; certain it is, that all shall appear before Christ's Judgment-seat, where the Witness against them will be their own Consciences bearing Testimony of the Good or Evil they have done, and this is doubtless the Book immediately following in the Verse mention'd to be open'd.

Then will be the Time that Conscience, which now is slighted and despised for every Trifle; nay, often stifled and forceably put to silence, will cry out against such as refused to hearken to her Dictates, who would not forbear Oppression, Lasciviousness, Extortion, Fraud and the like at her Rebukes, then will they wish they had hearken'd to the Voice of Conscience reproving them, and give a World (were it in their Power) they could recall the Time again they have mispent. Then the Accuser of the Brethren, shall aggravate their Sorrows in deriding their Folly, in hearkning to his Temptations, and wait to compleat the Destruction of the wretched

Souls

Souls that lie under the Wrath of God. Then Woe and Anguish, Wailing and Gnashing of Teeth will ensue; and their being deprived of the Joys of Heaven, will add another Hell to their Torments, more grievous than that they will be doomed to by the Sentence of the just Judge. Then those that now scoff at Religion, and conclude when the Body dies, and the Soul expires, that then there is no more reckoning to be made, will find by woful Experience a Resurrection take hold of them, and hurry them to this dreadful Tribunal, with all the Circumstances of Horror and Amazement attending on them; then Fear and Trembling will take hold on them, and in vain they shall wish their wild Notions of a future State had proved true, but find themselves miserably mistaken, and undone and riuned for leaning on them. Therefore let me advise all to think seriously of this, before they are plunged in a boundless Ocean of Misery, and repent and turn from the Error of their Ways.

As for the Doctrine of the Resurrection, it is so plainly made out in the old and new Testament, and so fully warranted, that all who are not obstinate or senseless, cannot

cannot but acknowledge the Truth of it, and firmly believe it shall be as God has appointed it at the last Day.

The Prophet *Daniel* assures us, *That they that sleep in the Dust shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to everlasting Shame*, Dan. 12. 13. And St. *John* says, *The Time shall come, in which all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and they shall come forth; and they which have done Good shall go unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil unto the Resurrection of Condemnation*, John v. 28. I might bring a Cloud of Testimonies from Scripture to confirm this Truth, and confute all Gain-sayers, but for Brevety's sake I leave the Reader to find them in the Book of God; and the Design and Intent of this Resurrection is to no other End, than that both Good and Bad shall come to Judgment: *We must*, says St. *Paul*, *all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, that every Man may receive the Things that he hath done in the Body, whether it be good or evil*, 2 Cor. 10. And again, Heb. 9. 7. *It is appointed for all Men once to die, and after that to come to Judgment*; for as sure as Men and Women must die, so sure it is they must rise again, and come to Judg-

ment. This being so evident, what manner of Persons ought we then to be, in all holy Conversation, in exhorting and perswading one another to Repentance? Even all, both Poor and Rich, Minister and People, that by repenting of our Sins and turning to God, we may be enabled to lead a new Life, and with St. *Paul*, be careful to keep a good Conscience, void of Offence towards God and Man, 2 *Cor.* 1. and that will be the best Comforter at all Times: For if our Conscience accuse us not, God, who is greater than our Conscience and knoweth all Things, will not condemn us, for great is his Faithfulness towards us in keeping his Promise at all Times, for tho' Heaven and Earth shall pass away, yet not one Jot of his Word shall fail us.

In this great Day we find both great and small shall appear, high and low, without any distinction, the Poor as well as the Rich, and no difference of Person shall be made upon the Account of the Honour, Wealth, or any Dignity they have enjoy'd in this Life, from poor, needy, distressed and despicable People, who in their Pilgrimage thro' this Vale of Tears, endured Hard-

Hardship, Want and Tribulation; but Justice shall be administred impartially to all: Then only what they have done in the Flesh, whether good or evil, will be the Concern to be weighed in the Ballance; and those that are found wanting, whose Names are not written in the Book of Life, shall be banished from the Presence of the Lord, into the dismal Regions of Darkness, Woe and Horror, to converse with Howlings and Lamentations, as long as Eternity shall endure, and that is for ever and ever: But those that are found Weight in the Scale of Justice, shall ascend in Triumph with their Glorious Redeemer and Judge, to Mansions prepared for them, built without Hands, in the Highest Heavens, to chaunt forth Songs of Praises and Hallelujahs, World without end. Which God grant us all Hearts to attain, by a timely and sincere Repentance, and a speedy turning from the Evil of our ways. *Amen.*

The last Great ASSIZE.

The Second Sermon.

Rev. xx, v. 12. &c.

And I saw the Dead, both small and great stand before God, and the Books were opened: And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life: And the Dead were judged out of those things which were written in the Book, according to their Deeds.

HAVING plainly described to you an Entrance upon this great Mistery of the Judgment-day, when all shall be summon'd to appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, coming in great Majesty and Power to judge the quick and the dead, and to reward every one according to their Deeds done in the Flesh, whether they be good or evil: I now come to make a further progress with a clearer Light in the matter.

That Christ will come to judge both small

small and great, is an undeniable Truth, that is high and low, for no doubt at that day all shall arise in their Native Strength and Beauty, Strong and Vigorous, as our first Parents were, in the Prime of our years; for we cannot conceive that Infants dying in their little and weak Estate shall so rise; or that Age and Decripedness will then remain, to those that like mellow'd Fruit have drop'd in the Grave; but that all these Imbecillities and Infirmities shall be done away, and shall rise strong and vigorous, thereby being inabled to undergo the Eternity of Happiness or Misery, they shall immediately enter upon, full of Sense and Capacity, to be satiated with Joy inexpressible, or bear in a mighty degree the Miseries and Torments they shall be doomed to, for Sinning away their day of Grace, whilst it was offered them in this Life, wherein they were wooed and pushed on, as it were to Repentance, by kind Invitations, Calls, and the Motions of God's holy Spirit, who then made Intercession for them with Groans unutterable, whilst they strove to grieve him by going on in a sinful Course, and notwithstanding that was done to perswade and draw them to it, dyed unrepenting. As

As for any particular Place, or part of the World where this Resurrection shall more immediately begin and be, whether in the Valley of *Jehosaphat* near *Jerusalem*, held to be the middle of the Earth, as many hold, and bring Authorities to strengthen their Opinions in this Belief, or in some other Place, I hold it not material to my purpose to discourse, since certain it is, that the general Judgment shall be in such a place and order, as the great Judge of all the Earth shall think in his infinite Wisdom to appoint or set forth; nor does any fixed place to me seem likely to ground a stress upon, since we shall be caught up from the Earth to meet the Lord in the Clouds at his coming in Glory, enthron'd amidst the Cherubims, attended with ten thousand times ten thousand Saints and Angels, who shall gather us from all Nations, even from the four Winds of Heaven, and then shall the Books be opened: Nor will it be with the tedious Ceremony of an Earthly Judge, calling and examining Witness; but all appearing, both great and small, shall be judged according to the Written Record, even according to the Books, for they shall be opened.

I have discovered to you something of the first Book, which is the Book of Conscience, in my foregoing Sermon, which every Man and Woman in their Life-time had in the close Repository of their own Breast, and not another for them; so that nothing could be written therein to be found against them now it shall be opened, but what they were conscious of and consenting to; and this at the great Day shall be as valid as Ten Thousand Witnesses either to excuse or accuse them before the upright Judge, for then there shall need no more Evidence, or any other Witness against us but our own Consciences; for as God hath his infinite Book of Knowledge, in which all our Words, Thoughts and Actions are exactly set down and numbred, as certain as if they were written in a Book, so every One has from him a Book, *viz.* That of Conscience, to register every Thing in themselves, that nothing done shall there be omitted.

Holy *David* truly acknowledged this, when he said, *Thou, O Lord, knowest the Thoughts of my Heart before I utter them.* And with this Book shall be opened another Book, which is the Book of the Law,

given us as a Rule and Guide to walk by; and by this Book of the Law all our Actions must be tryed and examined, and this is properly call'd God's Book of Remembrance. And when these Books are opened and strictly compared, we shall find our Sins do agree in every Tittle. Then follows the Book of Judgment, which the dreadful or comfortable Sentence will be pronounced by; and after these, the Book of Life will be enclosed, in which their Names are written that shall be pronounced good and faithful Servants; and this is unalterable, and cannot be changed by Time, or defaced.

Thus kind is God to us, and careful of us, that all Things are so exactly kept that no wrong shall be done us; for we shall have all the Priviledge imaginable to see how our Cause will bear us out. First, the Book of the Law shall be opened, then that of Conscience, the One showing us what we ought to do, and the Other what we have done; and against the First of these, no Man or Woman shall be capable of any exceptions; for as *David* says, *The Commandments of the Lord are pure and righteous altogether*, Psalm 16. And for the Second

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it having been always in our own keeping what can we be able to object against it, for nothing could happen in that, as I have said, but what we must be knowing of our selves.

Having thus far proceeded, now I come more close to the Doctrinal Part of this, shewing that all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions must come to Judgment; for every Man's Book shall be opened, in which are set down even the Thoughts of our Heart, so that there is no Secret that we kept as we thought never so secure within our Breasts, but it shall be found recorded in this Book of Conscience, when once it is opened; for *Job* on this account says, *Thou hast sealed up all our Sins in a Bag*, which plainly demonstrates a kind of keeping them against the Day of Reckoning, even all those Sins that now we pass so lightly over, committed by Thought, Word and Deed, or cast out of our Remembrance, will, in the Day of Account, be summed up, and produced against us so undeniably, that none can contradict the Charge; for 'tis our own Conscience that marks and writes them down, and if they are not left and repented of in this Life,

miserable will be the Estate of our Souls, when those Books are opened, and our convicting Sins are found uncancelled in them.

Holy *David* considering this, look'd upon it as a great Mercy, that God had given him a Sight of his, *viz. Thou hast set my Misdeeds before me, and my secret Sins in the Sight of thy Countenance.* This, if every one would consider to weigh aright, how would they be careful and watchful over their Hearts and Lips, that they offended not in Thought or Word, much more in their Deeds? How many Sins that pass by unregarded, would be taken notice of? And their Deformity appearing, more care would be taken to avoid them, that they might not be found written in the Book of Conscience, to arise up against us at the great and terrible day of the Lord's Coming to judge the World.

Now for want of this due Regard, and serious Consideration, how frequently do we find Envy, Malice, and their attendant Mischiefs, brood and breed in the Hearts of Men and Women, till they break forth in innumerable Evils? For want of a watch before our Lips, what abundance of

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prophane and blasphemous Expressions, break forth? What Swearing and Cursing, Reviling and Reproaching, Slandering, Lying, Back-biting, Detracting, and many other Abuses of the Tongue escape us with such an Indifferency as if Men did not offend in so doing, and of so small a Regard to many that they soon forget them, never dreaming they are registred in the Book of Conscience, and will rise up against them at the last to aggravate their Condemnation? Tho' they cannot be ignorant our blessed Saviour himself has affirmed they will, when he says, *That we must give an Account of every idle Word at the Day of Judgment*, Mat. 12. 35. However we flatter our selves here, and put far away from us the evil Day, we shall then too sadly find, that tho' our Mirth and Jolitry has now justled them perhaps out of our Thoughts, the Account of them will not be passed over, when the Secrets of all Hearts shall be lay'd naked and open before the great Judge, whatever has been done in Secret shall be published on the House-top, and shall come to light.

Seeing these Things will assuredly come

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to pass, what manner of Men ought we to be in all Godly Conversation and Honesty? For Conscience being so tender a Thing, that if prick'd by Sin it will blemish and wound it; we ought highly to regard how we suffer Sin to come near it, least it not only wound it but Shipwrack and make Havock of it, to the eternal Prejudice of our Souls; and in this Case *Solomon* gives us a very necessary Caution, when he says, *Counterguard thy Heart, and watch over thy Soul*, Prov. 4. 4. *that thou do not any Thing that may Wound thy Conscience.*

Now the best Means to preserve a good Conscience, is to keep with great Care that Book of Account by which we must be judged even and unblemished, pure and good; And to do this, there are two Things especially required, *First*, To avoid all that may any ways prejudice a good Conscience. *Secondly*, Be careful to use all good Means and Helps to cherish it. And to do this, be sure take heed of falling into any Sin, be it never so small, seeing lesser Sins usher in greater; and for the least, were not God's Mercy infinite, and over all the Works of his Creation, he might justly

justly destroy us; and indeed without his great Mercy, who could be able to stand before him in the great Day of Account? There are moreover two especial lets and hinderances of a good Conscience. First, Ignorance of the Law and Word of God; for when a Man is ignorant what is Sin, how then can he take heed least he wound his Soul? For a poor ignorant Soul, not knowing the Law of God, cannot readily perceive any Wound in his Conscience; nor any Things amiss there, though much be out of Frame and in disorder, but by the Light of the Word of God he may see it plainly as in a Glass.

The other Hindrance of a good Conscience is worldly Lusts, as the Love and Desire of Riches, Pleasure, Honour, &c. which grounding by strong Desires so firmly in the Heart, hinder the Keeping of a good Conscience; and therefore to prevent the sad Effects of these, in the first Place do every Thing that may serve and cherish true saving Faith, whereby your Souls may be ascertain'd of the Love of God in Jesus Christ for the Pardon of your Sins, Faith being the Root and Foundation of a good Conscience, and without it

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the Conscience must need be defective and evil; and to keep this Faith stedfast it is requisite that every One hear and read the Word of God, often repenting earnestly of Sins already committed, and taking a diligent Care not to commit any more for the Future, but continuing to walk in the Path of Faith and true Repentance, and by so doing, you will find the daily encrease of a good Conscience; and here all must be very heedful that they offend not again, to separate from them the Feeling of God's Love, and so wound their Consciences.

Now Secondly, It is great Wisdom to endeavour in all Things to obey the Will of God, and to resolve not to Sin in any Thing; for a Course of living in Sin, and a good Conscience, cannot stand together, for where a Purpose is to live in Sin, there can be neither Faith, nor a good Conscience.

Thirdly, It is requisite in this Case to walk with God by example, as did *Enoch* and *Elias*, to keep our Life blameless as if we always see our selves standing in the Presence of God; for whatever we may think, assuredly his all-seeing Eye is ever

ver looking into our Thoughts and Actions, when we least imagine he beholds us, and tho' he for a time delays to punish Sinners, yet most certainly it will fall heavy upon them in the End; and always to remember, is the ready way to make us keep a good Conscience, the want whereof emboldens Men in Sin, because they consider not as they ought to do, that is, not aright, *viz.* that God sees them, and that they have a Conscience within to witness against them at the last Day.

Now in prosecuting my Text, I find these Words, *viz. And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life.* Now the meaning of this Book is, that when Christ the Judge, has examin'd the Book of Mens Consciences, and found what was written therein, that according to their Evidence, testifying Good or Evil, Judgement may accordingly be awarded: And now he sheweth that to that end, he will open the second Book, and that it is the Book of Life, which is so often made mention of in the Word of God, of the Old and New Testament. *Moses* intreating God's Pardon for the Sins of the *Israelites*, says, *But if thou wilt not pardon them, I beseech thee, raze*

raze me out of the Book which thou hast written, Exod. 23. 23. and again, *David* says, *Let them be put out of the Book of Life, neither let them be written with the Righteous*, Psal. 69. 18. and again, *He that overcometh shall be cloathed in white Raiment, and I will not put out his Name out of the Book of Life*, Rev. 21. 7. And the Holy Ghost speaking of the new *Jerusalem*, tells us plainly, *There shall enter into it no unclean thing, neither whatsoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life*, Rev. 2. 5. *and* Phil. 4. 3.

This Book of Life, so often made mention of, can be concluded nothing else, but God's Eternal Council, Purpose and Decree to the faithful in Christ Jesus, on whom he will bestow Eternal Life and Happiness; for we must not take it in the literal Sense that God has any need of a Book, but only for our plainer understanding, he thus speaketh; for he has his Saints in eternal Remembrance, so that not one of them shall be forgotten.

Thus having laid down what is meant by this Book, it is next to be considered what may be learned from hence, and that is to know assuredly, that God hath a

Book

Book of Life, wherein the Names of his Chosen are written, and can call them by their Names: Christ is the true Shepherd of his Flock, and they are always numbered before him; *I am*, says he, *the Good Shepherd, I know my Sheep, and I am known of them*, John 10.

Again, The Knowledge of God is so truly exact and perfect, that nothing can be so secret that is hid from him, *He searcheth the Heart trieth the Reins, and understandeth the Heart long before; his Eyes are like a flaming Fire, and his Feet like unto fine Brass*, as St. *John* tells us, *Chap.* 2. 18. To shew that nothing can escape his Sight, or be hid from it.

Now as for the Uses of these Considerations, we may in the first Place learn the happy State of God's chosen Ones, for all such are written in the Book of Life, and so consequently blessed for ever, for Christ will not blot out their Names that are there written, but own them before his Father, and prefer them to Honour and Glory. But wretched and woful will the State of all those whose Names are not found written in the Book of Life be in the last Day; for they shall not enter into

into the new *Jerusalem*, but be utterly excluded from all Bliss and Happiness; however, let none be too secure that their Names are written in this Book, and rely upon that only for their Salvation, doing otherwise as themselves list, least in the End they find themselves mistaken and miserably deceived; for tho' God made us without our help, yet he has not absolutely promised, that he will save us without our Help and Endeavours after Righteousness; for if he hath elected any to eternal Life, he has withal ordained they should walk circumspectly in the Way leading thereto; and that others seeing their good Works, may glorifie their Father which is in Heaven.

Again, It is plainly told us, That God hath a Book, wherein all the Names of the Elect are written; yet it is an arrogant Presumption in any One to ascertain himself his Name is set down there, if he lives in a sinful Course of Life, or but supinely, negligently or regardlesly refusing to work out his Salvation with Fear and Trembling, or to make his Calling and Election sure to him by all possible Diligence and Industry in the Ways of Uprightness;

Uprightness; and so to be assured of it, is Joy indeed. We find our Blessed Saviour, when his Disciples rejoyced because the Devils were subdued under them, and cast out by them, as it were rebuking them for this Joy, as a thing of little Moment to them, saying, *Nay, rather rejoyce that your Names are written in the Book of Life.* This is a Joy, where it can be assured to us, exceeding all other Joys; and the Joys that take upon Mens Minds for Riches, or Honour, High Birth, or Promotion, are but Shadows, and nothing comparable to it? For as for these, a good Conscience far exceeds them: And yet we find but few rejoycing at this great Benefit of being a Child of God, and that his Name is written in the Book of Life.

Now from these Observances and Considerations, arise two weighty Points to be weighed by us, and prudently discussed; and first, whether there be a Possibility that any one can be assured that his Name is written in the Book of Life? And again, If it be possible to be known, then by what means we may attain to the Knowledge of it? Now as to the first of these Considerations; The Church of *Rome* tells us,

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All we have to assure us in this, is to hope well, and beyond it, all is dark and not to be seen into; but on this we ought not to rest or relie, for surely it is very imprudent, and very dangerous, to rest upon an uncertain Hope in so weighty a Matter as our Salvation? No, we must make a further Progress, and labour by all righteous Means to be assured, and certainly perswaded of this Hope, that our Names are written in the Book of Life, if so blessed a Light can be gained as a certain Assurance in this matter on this side Heaven; many indeed hold it possible, and fetch their Warrants from the reveal'd Word of God. St. *Peter* admonishes us, *To give all Diligence, to make our Calling and Election sure*, 1 Pet. 2. 20. And our Saviour bids his Disciples *Rejoice that their Names were written in the Book of Life*, John 19. And indeed the Articles of our Christian Faith do confirm the Truth of this Doctrine; where we are directed to believe the Catholick Church, and that we shall have Life everlasting; yet all this must be done with a firm Reliance on God's Favour and Mercy, void of all Presumption, or any fancy of Merits or Works of our own to oblige

oblige him to save us, or give us this assurance, having only a strong Faith and Hope in him, and a firm Reliance upon him, and then we may address our selves to his Mercy-seat with Comfort, and a sure Confidence in him.

As to the second Point, which is, how any one shall be certainly assured that he is a Child of God, and his Name written in the Book of Life; which is a matter of exceeding Moment, and that very nearly concerns the Welfare of the Soul of every Man and Woman; and therefore it is necessary we should be very heedful and attentive in hearkening to it, that we may be able to try and prove our selves whether we be in the Faith or not, whether we be the Children of God, or no? For this is a matter of senseless comfort to those that can assure themselves they are set down in God's Book of Accounts, as part of his Family, to whom eternal Life appertaineth as an Inheritance, this must needs stir them up to their Duty with all Obedience and Chearfulness, all the days of their appointed time here on Earth.

Now the way to know this, as much as may be, is by descending into our selves, and

and looking on the Marks and Testimonies of our own Hearts to prove that we are included in the Number of God's chosen People; for as *Solomon* tells us, *As Water sheweth Face to Face, so even the Heart sheweth Man to Man*, Prov. 27. 19. And therefore to know a certainty of this great Happiness, we must enter into our Souls, and prove our selves, which is the only way to get comfort, in a certain Assurance that we are not out of God's Favour; for if we find written on the Tables of our Hearts, the true Marks and Tokens of God's Children.

Then let us Rejoyce, in concloding our Names are Written in the Book of Life, and that we shall be saved; but as for those that make no Conscience of Sinning, they will find upon Self-examination their state to be very wretched and deplorable, and can only say to themselves they are Poluted and Defiled, and that their Souls totter on the Brink of everlasting Ruine, into which, without God's great Mercy, they must be swallowed up in the Pit of Destruction at the last day of Judgment, and to this let us search the Word of God, which is the true Touch-stone, to try us whe-

whether we are Currant in God's Account or not.

The most notable Mark to know whether we are in a safe Way or not, is the inward Testimony or Witness of God's holy Spirit, working in our Hearts, and leading us to Repentance. St. *Paul* tells us, the wicked and ungodly Sinners, which are destitute of the Spirit of God to guide and lead them into the Way of all Truth, but live in Sin, have only the Spirit of Bondage, *Rom.* 8. 15. They have no solid Peace to their Souls. But they that wait upon God, and are his Children have the Spirit of Adoption, which makes known unto them that they are the Children of God: *For*, as the same Apostle further saith, *his Spirit doth witness to our Spirit, that we are the Sons of God*, Rom. 8. 16.

And now that none may deceive themselves, and conceive they have the Testimony of God's Spirit, when they are destitute of so great a Benefit and Blessing. The same Apostle gives two excellent Marks to know it; it makes us cry, *Abba Father*, and where the Spirit of God witnesseth to our Spirits, that we are Children of God, it makes us Lowly and Humble, Meek

Meek and Contrite, crying and praying unto God continually with Sighs and Tears, the blessed Fruit of a broken and contrite Hearts, which God will not despise nor reject. So *David* did in the Sincerity of his Heart humbled himself, and confess'd his Sins, watering his Couch with Tears, and left his unfeigned Repentance on Record, a Pattern and Example for us to imitate, and so be happy as he was; but those whose Hearts are harden'd, and cannot thus repent, pray or cry to the Lord and that all their attempted Devotions seem tedious, wearisome and uneasie to them that are in a bad State, and have not the Spirit of God witnessing to their Spirit, but take more Pleasure in Sin, whose Wages is Death, than in Godliness which is great Gain, even spring up to everlasting Life, there to reap a Harvest of Crowns and Scepters in Glory.

Again, If we are satisfied with the Testimony of God's Holy Spirit, that we are his Chosen, we shall ever rejoyce in doing his Will, always be repenting of our Sins past, and to the utmost of our Powers striving against and avoiding every Temptation, that otherwise would so easily

easily beset us, and put us to the Foil, we then shall be very careful, and much afraid to offend our loving Father, not so much out of fear of Punishment for Sin, as out of filial Duty and Obedience, Reverence and awful Respect to him who hath so loved us from the Beginning; for surely those that are not afraid to offend him only for the Fear of Punishment, are like Offenders against the Law of a Nation or Country, who fear not to act the horrible Crimes, yet being brought to Justice, tremble at the Punishment; and if they are sorrowful for any Thing, it is because they are at last overtaken, and can go on in a Course of Sinning no longer: And these can have no Ground to settle their Assurance on, or comfort themselves, unless flatteringly and deceitfully to their own Souls, that their Names are written in the Book of Life.

The next Means to gain this good Assurance, is from the Word of God, for that tells us, *Whosoever believeth in Jesus Christ, shall be saved*; that is, if he believes aright in Truth and sincerity of Heart, and comply and close with him on his Terms offer'd in the Gospel, for a bare Believing, without something else, will not do it. It

is said, the Devils believe and tremble; yet that Belief is nothing available to them, because they have put themselves out of a State of Salvation; and tho' they believe, it is only a Knowledge of him, that he is the Son of God, and will be a Scourge and Punishment to them in the Day of his Wrath and fiery Indignation: But a Child of God hearing and applying the Word of God to his Soul, has another kind of Benefit by it, for having Faith, he knoweth that he hath it; and so believing with all his Heart and applying Christ's Merits to him, that stedfast and unshaken Faith will make him wise unto Salvation, and give him the Comfort to believe, he shall certainly be saved.

Again, the Testimony of God's Spirit cannot deceive any, and by the Witness of the Word of Truth we may know and be assured, that we stand fast and immoveable in the Fruits and Effects thereof; for as a Man may judge of a Tree by the Fruits it beareth or bringeth forth, so by the Effects of the Spirit or Word of God working in our Hearts, we may reasonably guess, whether our Names are written in the Book of Life or not, and of this S^t. *Paul* testifies as to God's chosen Ones

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when he says, *Whom God predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, he also justified; and whom he justified, them also he sanctified*, Rom. 8. 38. So that from this it is evident, that God first called them, then justified them, and lastly sanctified them; and those whom he so kindly deals with, may be assured their Names are written in the Book of Life. And these are the three main Effects of our Assurance, and into these we ought seriously to enquire, as we may, whether we are so happy as being in God's Favour to be within the Compass of them; for if we have not the Marks and Tokens of these three engraven on the Tables of our Hearts, we can have no certain Assurance that our Names are set down in the Heavenly Record.

As for the first Fruit of these, it is our effectual Calling; as when God by the Preaching of his Word makes us sensible of the State we are in by Nature, calling us out of the World from our old Sins, to become of the Number of his People, and to live as his Children, obedient to his Will in all things. Thus *Samuel*, *Peter*, *John*, *Matthew*, and *Paul*, were called to be Saints, and receive an Inheritance in

Glory at the Ends of their Labours; and so all faithful Men and Women in one Degree or other will be called, that they may be made Partakers of the blessed Reward that Christ is gone before to prepare for them in his Kingdom of Glory; Rewards laid up for the Righteous, that neither Eye hath seen, Ear heard, nor hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive.

Again, When by Preaching the Word, a Man's Sins are set before him, so that he plainly sees them, as also God's Anger and Distaste at them, and then Sorrows exceedingly, and Laments and Bewails his ever having offended so good and gracious a God, whose Promises are so Liberal and Bountiful towards him, and so in Sorrow and Contrition of Spirit, humbly and lowly begs Pardon at the Hands of his Maker, and becomes a new Man, to believe in Christ Jesus, and as *Nicodemus* did, seek earnestly after the Kingdom of God and its Righteousness; then he will begin to live.

For he who finds an effectual Calling in himself, may have this Comfort in his Soul, to assure himself, that he is predestinated

nated to eternal Life; however let all be very cautious that they are not herein deceived, in mistaking and outward Calling, for an inward and spiritual One, seeing our Saviour tells us, *Many are called, but few are chosen*, Mat. 12. 'Tis not barely being called to hear the Word preached with our outward Ears, but we must so labour as to find the Spirit of God Preaching to our Souls, applying his Word unto our Consciences, so that we may believe it and obey it, and this is the prime Mark of a good Christian, and carries with it a very great Assurance of eternal Life.

As for the Fruit of Election, it is Justification; *For whom he predestinated, them he called; whom he called, them he justified*; &c. 1 *Thess.* 2. 12. And this is another singular Mark, even our Justification, and is a peculiar and wonderful Grace of God in justifying a wretched Sinner that must be saved, and become an Inheritor of eternal Life; and this Justification carries it in two Parts, *viz.* the Pardon of our Sins, and the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness; for before this can be had, we must earnestly repent us of our Sins, be

thoroughly sensible of them, and abhor and detest them, and beg Pardon of God for them, and so our blessed Redeemer will seal that Pardon for us.

In the next place we must have a true Faith in Christ, laying hold upon him, and wrestle as it were with him, as *Jacob* did, and not let him go, till he hath given us a Blessing; nay further, we must be fully satisfied in our Souls and Consciences that Christ dyed for us, and shed his precious Blood, to redeem to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works; that he fulfilled the Law for us, and will cover our Sins with the Robes of his Righteousness; nay then note further, that where there is Obedience, there also is Remission of Sins; and where that is, there is Justification, and that Justification entails us to Salvation; and yet ne'rtheless we must not conclude we can have this by Nature, but by that Regeneration which Christ worketh in our Hearts, for no Man can hope for a Pardon of his Sins, so long as he lives in them, and continues in a natural State.

Now another Fruit there is of Election, which is to be Regenerate and Sanctified, and to be so sanctified, a Man must dye

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to Sin, and live to Righteousness in newness of Life, labouring to know Christ and the Vertue of his Resurrection, which must be a Ground-work of Man's Regeneration, and on it he must build up to himself a Resurrection from Sin, and to look unto his Heart, to find if he be sanctified; and if he be, he may assure himself his Name is written in the Book of Life, particularly when he finds in himself a hatred to all Sin, and love of all Vertue, for there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who live not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit, *Rom.* 1. But on the contrary, where a Man lives in fleshly and worldly Delights, he can have no Assurance of it, *For whosoever is born of God, sinneth not*, 1 John 5. 18.

And again, Let every One that calleth upon the Name of the Lord depart from Iniquity, 2 *Tim.* 2. And thus to die to Sin and live in Righteousness, is a sure Mark we are God's Children, and that our Names are written in the Book of Life which God keepeth, to know which assuredly is the greatest Comfort that can be had to bear up our Spirits in all Afflictions and Sufferings, for then nothing can

trouble or hurt us, *For if God doth justifie who can condemn?* Rom. 8. 34. And out of this Book of Life Christ will call to us, saying, *Come ye Blessed of my Father*, &c. So we shall not come to a furious angry Judge, but to a mild and most merciful Saviour.

And now to bring this Sermon to a Conclusion, Let every one take comfort, that can from these Marks and Tokens assure himself his Name is written in the Book of Life: And this so great a Moment, that Christ commands us to rejoyce above all Things in this, *That our Names are written in the Book of Life.* Then let it be our main Business to strive and earnestly labour for this infinite Treasure, living soberly, justly and godly in this present Life, *Tit.* 3. That we may die to Sin, e're we die to Nature. Let us walk from Strength to Strength, from one Vertue to another, till at length we grow perfect before the Lord, and reap the Reward of a good Life in endless Glory and Blessedness. *Amen.*

The

The last Great ASSIZE.

The Third Sermon.

Rev. xx, v. 12, 13.

And the Dead were judged out of the things that were written in the Books, according to their Works.

And the Sea gave up the Dead which were in her: And Death and Hell deliver'd up the Dead that were in them, and they were judged every Man according to his Works.

AS for the Book of Life, mentioned in my Text, I hope I have sufficiently explained what is meant by it; yet to be more full and plain, take it further in brief thus:

The Book of Life is the Counsel and Decree of the *Almighty's Election*, wherein those that are called and elected, have their Names registred or recorded, that they may be admitted to eternal Life, and none

shall be passed over, or forgotten at the great Day, but come in perpetual remembrance before the righteous Judge of all the Earth. And from what has been said, every Man and Woman may learn how they ought to be assur'd, that their Names are written in this Book, by such Marks as a Christian cannot well fail to know it, *viz.* by the Testimony of God's Spirit, which cannot lie.

And again, By the Fruits and Effects of Election, as Justification, Vocation, and Sanctification, Love of the Brethren, and ready Obedience to all God's Commands, and therefore it stands as much upon to labour with all Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure, that these Marks may visibly appear in us, witnessing to our Hearts and Consciences, that we are the Elect of God to our endless Comfort.

And now again, I find that St. *John* proceedeth to describe the last Judgment, as it was reveal'd to him in his wonderful Vision in the Isle of *Patmos*, whether he was banished for the Profession of the Christian Faith, and the Manner he sets down, is, *That even we shall be judged according to those things written in the Book, according to our Works.* It

It is already set down, That he saw all, *both great and small stand before God*; by which we see none shall be wanting at that Day; every Man's Book shall be open'd and every Ones Conscience be try'd by the Things that are written in the Book, for when Christ the righteous Judge shall sit upon the Throne, then shall the Book be open'd even of Conscience, and all Things that have been done, shall be called to remembrance, and nothing that is then alledg'd be able to be gain-said, and in these Words we may especially observe three Points:

First, As to the Parties that shall appear, even the Dead both small and great from all Ages of the World; and next is to be noted, that God would have us be assured of the last Day: *First*, For his Glory. *Secondly*, For our Consolation. *Thirdly*, That we may continue in our Obedience and Fear of him.

And again, That all might be inexcusable, who refuse to take notice of it.

The First of these then may serve us to exercise our Faith and Patience, and put a Bridle on our Words, Thoughts and Actions, to restrain us from doing amiss, and to hinder our too much Curiosity

sity, and so contain us within the Bounds of our Duty: And to this End, our Saviour says, *Be ye always ready, for in such an Hour as ye think not of, the Son of Man cometh.*

Again, The Means by which we must be try'd, even by those Things that are written in our Consciences, which are the Books of Record ready to be produced, either excusing or condemning us at the last Day: And *Thirdly*, The Touch-stone of Tryal, which is the Word of God.

And now *First*, of the Persons, they shall be both great and small that are to stand before God, from whom nothing can be hid, nor can their long Continuance in the Grave make any Thing to be forgot, neither good nor evil Deeds; all shall be lay'd naked and open to his Eyes, to whom Darkness is as Light: Those that have done well, and suffered Persecution for Christ, shall be rewarded, as the Apostles, sitting upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of *Israel*, &c. not that they shall pronounce Judgment, but as it were fit to accompany the Judge, approving and applauding his righteous Judgment: But those that have done Violence, and lived in a Course of Sinning,

shall

shall be in Disgrace, and tremble with Horror at the expected Sentence, according as we read, Luke 13. 28. *That there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth*, when their evil Consciences shall fly in their Faces, and they not able to give up their Account that can at all justifie them before the Judge; and moreover, it will be a great Grief and Heart-aking, adding to their Misery, when they shall see *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* with the Apostles, Martyrs and other holy Men so advanc'd and entering into the Kingdom of Heaven whilst themselves are shut out, and deprived of a Felicity they might have so easily gain'd: Then their Case will be the same with *Dives*, seeing *Lazarus* in *Abraham*'s Bosom, and with him they shall be tormented without Relief.

Oh, then that Worldlings, who set their Hearts upon Riches, and center their highest Felicity in faring sumptuously every Day, would consider these Things, who for Trifles and momentary Pleasures throw away *eternal Felicity*, as a Thing, not worth their regarding; for if they do not now, then they will too sadly do it when there is no time to be recall'd, or remedy

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for their eternal Sufferings in endless Torments; nay, their Sense of Loss will be more grevious than the Pains they shall endure: Then they shall shake their Heads to see the Righteous advanc'd in Glory, saying, *These are they we had once in Derision, and counted their Lives Madness, but now they are exalted, and we are debased; we thought them without Honour, but now they are number'd among the Children of God, their Portion is amongst the Blessed, and they are highly in God's Favour*, &c. But we have not known the Ways of God, nor lived in his Fear, nor walked diligently with upright Consciences before him: And then shall they wish for Death, but it shall fly them; if they look about, they find no Friends, but on the contrary tormenting and upbraiding Enemies. Then will they wish they had died from their Mother's Womb, or never seen the Light. O, remember then, and be wise in Time, whilst the golden Opportunity is held forth! For tho you die here and go to the Grave, your Sins will not die with you, but remain alive to meet you and testifie against you at the Day of Judgment: And to this End *Solomon* gives a Caution when he says,

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Remember, O young Man, that for all this thou must come to Judgment, even all old Sins that have been committed in secret, will then come to Light; therefore it would be well if all would keep this in their Minds, tho' they dye and see Corruption, their Sins will not dye with them, nor be forgotten; for St. *John* tells us, *The Dead were judged*; and again, *God will bring every Work into Judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil*, Eccles. 14. 12. which must needs be a great Terror to the Wicked; but the Saints of God will be far from this Fear, being comforted by a good Conscience, and the Assurance they have as an Earnest of Happiness in God's Love and Favour extended to them; for tho' he punishes all our Sins in Strictness of Right, yet he hath Mercy in renewing the Punishment from us in Jesus Christ.

Now then such as have good Thoughts, even holy Things written in their Book of Conscience, which as I said, shall be an undeniable Evidence, they shall not be ashamed in that great Day of the Lord, but remain Happy and Blessed for ever; they shall rejoyce when the Book is laid open, wherein is found Repentance, Obedience,

Faith,

Faith, Love and Patience, *&c.* which shall be known and come to light; but on the other hand, Woe be to the Adulterers, Fornicators, Murtherers, Lyars, *&c.* for the Wages of such Sins is Death, and the Wrath and Curse of God upon them for ever.

To keep from this Tryal, there is no Excuse will serve turn, as I have married a Wife, bought a Farm, or Oxen, *&c.* such trivial Allegations will not be allow'd, for come they must, and stand naked before the Judge, as our first Parents did when God called them to their Tryal for breaking his Commandment, not being able to avoid his Sight; for when they fled and hid themselves, they were still in his Presence; tho' they foolishly thought otherwise; and upon their Tryal, made shifting and vain Excuses.

However we find they were constrained to appear, and submit to his Sentence, as all must do at the last day; we find also *Pilate* made an Excuse for himself, when he had condemned Christ, by washing his Hand, and saying, *He was innocent of the Blood of that just Man*; but it avail'd not, for that Righteous Blood was upon him, not

notwithstanding that Excuse, and will be upon his Conscience at the general Day of Judgment, which then will tell him otherwise; no Glozing then will be heard, but the naked Truth in every Thing will appear; we shall not be able to answer one Word of a Thousand, nor to keep any Thing back that shall be reveal'd, nor find it as it is in this World, when upon the humble Confession of our Sins to God, we may cry for Pardon, and hope for it; but then our Confession shall be to our open Shame, because it occasions (by the Means of those Sins, we shall be constrained to confess) our endless Destruction.

After this great Tryal, the Judge will separate the one from the other, the Just from the Unjust, the Sheep from the Goats; *For he shall send forth his Angels with the great Sound of a Trumpet, and they shall gather the Elect from the four Winds, and from one End of the Heavens to another*, Mat. 24. 31. Whereby it appears all shall come, both the one and the other, and then shall the Just shine as the Sun, and be as it were acquitted by Proclamation of, *Come ye Blessed*, &c. which makes St. *Paul* to express himself after this Manner, viz.

viz. *Herein is the Love of God perfect towards us, that we shall have Boldness at the Day of Judgment, which makes the Godly wish the hastening of that Day, and breathe forth, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly and tarry not.*

Considering these Things, and that there will be not Evidence wanting, every One carrying that in his own Breast, and that we must answer and give up our Accounts to the great Judge, and for every idle Word: What Account will they be able to give, who have been idle Hearers and idle Doers of his Word?

But for better Instruction, it is proper above all Things to be continually looking over the Book of Conscience in this Life, that we may seriously correct and revise it, whereby it may stand fair, when it shall be opened in the Life to come, and so it may happily excuse us from impending Wrath and fiery Indignation, seeing *David* advises to this when he says, *I will take heed to my Ways, that I offend not with my Tongue*; and accounts that Man blessed who is not press'd and weigh'd down with a Burthen of Sin lying on his Conscience.

St. *John* tells us, *All must appear*, and if all, then every Part of us must appear, the Soul

Soul and Body must be present at the great Tribunal, the Consideration of this made St. *Paul* be prudently careful to keep his Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Man, *Acts* 24. Because it is, that by the Means of which we must receive the Sentence of Salvation or Damnation, according to the things written in that Book.

O that our Sins then might with all diligence be blotted out, that so we might stand up with Boldness in the Day of our Lord's Coming, for if our Consciences accuse us not, God, who is greater than our Consciences, and knoweth all things, will not condemn us; and what a blessed thing will it be to have an excusing Conscience in that Day!

Again, considering the Sentence will pass according to the things written in our Book, let us keep our Consciences unpolluted with Sin, avoiding not only evil Actions, but also evil Thoughts and Words that defile them, and will rise up against us at the last Day, for St. *Paul* saith, *Even Thoughts shall either Excuse or Accuse us*, Rom. 22. And then consequently if we would truly repent we must repent

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us of all our vain Thoughts and Imaginations, for were there no other Sins written in the *Book of Conscience*, these would rise up and be a sufficient Evidence to convict us: Therefore let no Man lightly pass them over, as if they were of little Moment, and not much to be regarded; but labour to cleanse their Consciences from them, as well as from dead Works, that they may stand fair in the day of Account.

Above all, let every one beware of flattering himself, that he is more righteous than his Neighbour, as the proud Pharisee did, for that is a Stumbling-block laid in the Way to make him fall when he thinks he stands most sure; no, but let him that thinketh he stands, take heed least he fall; by continually looking into his Heart, and examining his Ways, that so he may blot out his Sins, by a true and timely Repentance, since our Saviour so strictly tells us, *That for every idle Word we must give an Account at the Day of Judgment*, Mat. 26.

Now that we may not be ignorant of what is written in the Book of Conscience, but more particularly be satisfied therein, St. *John* says, *That we shall all be judged*

judged according to their Works, Rev. 28. Mat. 23. 23. And again, *We must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, that every Man may receive the things that are done in the Body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be Good or Evil*, 2 Cor. 5. 10. By which it appears, we shall be judged, and receive our Reward according to our Doings; if they be Good, then our Reward is Glory, Life and Salvation; but if Evil eternal Death, Damnation and Destruction will be our sorrowful Portion, for our Works shall follow us, when we rest from our Labour here, and attend us in Life or Death; for which cause this Day of Judgment may be properly called the Day of Revelation, wherein all hidden Secrets shall be made known, tho' they be kept never so close in this World, or forgotten, laid as it were aside; but then the dark Secrets and Counsels of the Heart shall be manifested, for at that Day, *God shall judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ*, Rom. 2. 16.

From this you may perceive it is evident, that all Men and Women shall come to Judgment, even small and great; and that their Works shall be the Touch-stone

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by which they shall be tryed; and as they prove, so shall they be acquitted and glorified, or condemned and tormented; for even we find for *Adam*'s Transgression in Paradise, he entailed Death upon all Posterity, nay eternal Death, without a strict Repentance; and that Repentance neither had been of no avail, had not the Son of God dyed to appease the Wrath of his offended Father, and by his Righteousness reconcile him to fallen Man; but then Man must endeavour to procure to himself by his Humility and Obedience this high Favour, or else it will not effect him, he must seem lowly in his own Eyes, be penitent and sorrowful for his Sins, love Works of Mercy and Charity, and be Obedient to God's Commands, and then it is told him, *God is not unrighteous to forget his Works and Labour of Love*, &c. For in Regard of the Upright, Sentence shall be awarded according to their Works, and so to the wicked as their Deeds have been in the Flesh, and it shall be charged to them, *These things hast thou done*, Psal. 50. And again, *I was an hungry, and you fed me not.* Now seeing we must all receive Sentence according to our Works of Good or Evil,

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this ought to teach us above all Things to labour in holy Duties, that we may abound in Graces and Knowledge of God's Commands to render Obedience to them also in Repentance, Faith, Love, and be inflamed with a true Zeal to holy Things, Feeding, Cloathing and Harbouring the poor Members of Christ, which Acts of Charity he takes as done to himself; and then great shall be our Reward: For tho' these in a strict Sense can merit nothing at the Hands of the Judge, yet he being a most merciful and bountiful Saviour as well as Judge, will in no wise fail to reward it; for himself tells us in these Cases, *Verily, verily, of a Truth thou shalt not lose thy Reward.* Then how ought this to perswade all Men to do their utmost Endeavour, that they may be blessed with such a Happiness that Eye hath not seen, Ear heard, nor hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive, when at a small Price they may attain to such exceeding great Reward; for tho' whatever we can do cannot merit, yet we have a sure Word of Promise, that for these things we shall be rewarded at the last day; and even in this Life, the Bellies of the

Hungry

Hungry fed, the Charitable shall praise them, and bring down Blessings upon their Baskets and Store, bringing Peace and Comfort to their Souls, more than all the Riches in the World any other ways disposed of, is able to afford them: For indeed, what is spent in Riot or sensual Pleasure, does but carry a Sting with them to torment in the End, leading Men thro' the Gates of Misery and Distress, being frequently a Punishment even in this Life, and fill the Book of Conscience with Sins that will cry loudly against them in the last Day, to astonish and confound them, when they stand in the greatest need of Comfort and Consolation. And this may or ought to teach us, *First*, The Fear of God, to deter us from falling into Sin. *Secondly*, Faith in Christ to procure us eternal Life. And *Thirdly*, To suffer patiently all Afflictions that may befal us in this World, seeing the great Reward expected will sufficiently Recompence whatever may happen to us in this *Vale of Tears*, and not to depend on Worldly Riches, that oftentimes makes themselves Wings and fly away, when Men stand in most need of them, or at the longest, Death separates

parates them from all, and they are constrained to leave them at their dying Hour; then what Madness is it for a Man to spend that precious Time allowed him to gain a happy Eternity, in heaping up such momentary Trifles as the Riches of this World, when he knows not who shall gather them? Or whether his Son shall be a wise Man or a Fool, keep them or squander them away to no Profit or Purpose? And however it happens, they shall avail nothing at the Day of Judgment, but rather multiply his Sorrow, unless they are disposed of, as a good Steward ought to lay them out, to the proper Ends to which they were given; and then they will be Registred in the Book of Conscience, and stand fair as Treasure laid up in Heaven, for a Supply when most need shall require it.

Seeing all these Things must assuredly come to pass, it is worth considering what manner of Men we ought to be in all Godliness, &c. and not incline so much to Things of this World, as to let the Cares of them grow up and choak the heavenly Seed, which God by his holy Word sows in our Hearts, least when

the Angels at the Sound of the Trumpet gather us together at the last Day, we are found unprofitable Servants, and receive the Wages due to so great a Negligence, as not improving the Tallents put into our Hands to Traffick for Riches in the eternal Country whither we are to go, and have an endless Enjoyment of them.

If Men would seriously consider, it is certain they would be wiser than to set their Hearts on Things that cannot profit, when their greatest Needs requires that to stand by them, that may administer Comfort and Consolation to them; for without such a Help, Men will be exceeding miserable in that great and terrible Day of the Lord, when the Earth shall be burnt up, and the Heavens are flaming about them, and every Thing threatens them with Destruction, but nothing appears they rely on for their Succuor or Safety? O be wise then in Time, and make a Covenant with the Lord to strive against Sin and worldly Vanities, against Corruptness of Life, or any Thing that may offend him, or grieve his holy Spirit to make it withdraw it self, and so as the Day of Grace and Salvation offered, may

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not return again; and then the Saying may be verified to bring Comfort and Consolation to the afflicted Souls, *viz. The Earth shall restore those that have slept in her, and the most High shall appear upon the Seat of Judgment, and Miseries shall vanish away, and long Sufferings shall have an End; Justice only shall continue, the Truth shall remain, and Unrighteousness shall bear no more Rule*, Esdras 7. 32.

Let me therefore in Bowels of Compassion entreat you, that things may go well with your precious and immortal Souls, in this your Day, to consider the things that belong to your eternal Peace, before it is too late, and before they be hidden from our Eyes, laying aside all immoderate Care of the World, and every Sin that does so easily beset you, to run the Race with Chearfulness that is before you, and so obtain the Crown; for those that do this, and are faithful unto Death, shall not miss to be rewarded with a Crown of Life, which God the righteous Judge has laid up in Store for all that love and fear him, walking in the Paths of Truth, and the Ways of Uprightness, which is of more value than ten thousand Worlds,

and who would struggle for a handful of Earth till he loses so glorious a Diadem?

Now some may make a Query why St. *John* says, *All must come to Judgment*; seeing our Saviour tells us, *He that believeth, shall not come in Judgment; but he that believeth not, is condemned already.*

Now if it be so ordain'd, that the Faithful shall not come to Judgment; why does he say, *All must come?* To this I thus reply:

Certain it is, that the faithful Believer shall not come into Judgment, that is, of Condemnation, for to them there is no Condemnation; but the Sentence of, *Come ye Blessed, &c.* will be suddenly pronounc'd; and as for the Wicked, it appears they are condemned already; however, they all must appear, both the one and the other, to be sentenced pursuant to their Condemnation; For as we find it, Eccles. 3. *God shall judge the Just, and the Unjust; the One to Salvation, and the Other to Condemnation*; so that every one must come, though their Coming will be different.

Now as to the other Point I propose, being the Touch-stone of the Tryal, by which

which Mens Thoughts, and Words, and Works ſhall be try'd, St. *Paul* tells us, *At this great Day God ſhall judge the Secrets of Mens Hearts by his Goſpel*, Rom. 1. 16. So it is evident our Thoughts, Words, and Works muſt take their Tryal by the Word of God; and whatever goes contrary to that, is evil: And ſince this muſt be done, how carefully ought we to Read and Hear, and well Underſtand his Law and Goſpel, that all our Words, Thoughts and Works may be agreeable to what is commanded, and direct us in them, that ſo we may be able to chuſe that which is Good, and eſchew that which is evil; for thoſe who are ignorant of them, are but in a very bad caſe, as St. *Paul* tells us, when he ſays, *That the Lord Jeſus will come in Flames of Fire, to render Vengeance to them that know him not, and obey not the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Theſ.

Conſidering then theſe things, all that love their Souls, ought highly to value the Word of God, and ſeek with all Diligence to be knowing in it, and obedient to the Precepts it contains, and then it will ſtand on their ſide; when on the contrary, thoſe who neglect it, or are ignorant

of it, that by which they must be judged, will stand against them to their Condemnation; therefore let all diligently labour to be instructed in it, read it, remember it, and square the Actions of their Lives by it as long as they are in this World, that so it may be well with them in the World to come.

Now in Verse 13. St. *John* says, *And the Sea gave up the Dead that were in her, and Death and Hell gave up the Dead that were in them, and they were judged every one according to their Deeds.*

Now it may seem strange to Men, that those who have been eaten by Fish, Fowl, or wild Beasts, and those Creatures been eaten again, perhaps, by Men that have been burnt to Ashes, and their Ashes scatter'd in the Wind or Waves, should rise again and come to Judgment; but when we consider there's nothing impossible with God, and that it was a more difficult Work to create all things out of nothing, than to recollect a little scattered Dust, and new form it again, we ought with Awe and Reverence to stand off at a Distance, and not dare to question or dispute the Actions of Omnipotence, but rather submissively believe

lieve it shall be so, because he has said it who is Truth it self, and cannot lye. And again, seeing the Wicked prosper here more than the Just, it is but reasonable there should be a Time of rewarding the One, and punishing the Other; the Godly to be made Partakers of Life and Joy, and the Wicked of Shame and Punishment: And this will certainly be done at the last Day of Judgment, when all shall come before the righteous Judge, who has Rewards and Punishments to distribute, as in his righteous Judgment he shall determine.

But not to spend Time nicely upon proving the Resurrection, which is assured to us by our Saviour and his Apostles, and the wise Men of all Ages, which if they were not indeed the best Men, here they were of all others the most Miserable; but Christ being certainly risen from the Dead, and become the first Fruits of them that slept in the Dust, all shall likewise arise to appear at his Judgment-seat in the last Day, for were this not so, all our Religion is in vain. But seeing none but a few Atheists and Epicureans deny it, affirming Men die like Beasts, and dying both

their Joys and Sorrows ends at once, I shall not struggle to confute 'em more than the Scripture has plainly done; and indeed, by the Way it may be a Question, whether even these Men, in a great Degree, do not believe it, but seem not so to do, least it should hinder them in their Progress of worldly Pleasures and wicked Course of Living; to which End, no doubt, they wish there might be no Resurrection, or dreadful Day of Account: Yet for all this, when they come to die they are mostly of another Opinion, their Consciences then telling them, they must one Day arise and come to Judgment; so that Trembling and Horror seizes them, and they go out of the World despairing of Mercy. But to come closer to my Purpose:

As for Christ's rising from the Dead, it was not barely to expiate our Sins, but also to obtain Righteousness for us, even to give us the holy Spirit, and the Comforts of eternal Life. For

First, *He rose for our Justification.*

Secondly, *For our Regeneration.* And

Thirdly, *For our Resurrection to everlasting Life and Glory in the World to come!*

These were the blessed Benefits he obtain'd

tain'd for us by his dying and rising again; and these he applies to us, which he merited for us of his own free Love. Now as for the Fruits of this glorious Resurrection, they are,

1. That by his Merits we are confirmed he hath made perfect Satisfaction for our Sins.

2. The Application of his Benefits, which could not have effectually been applied unless he had died and rose again: Thereby sending the Comforter, or Holy Ghost, by whose Gifts and Graces we are in Christ, regenerated and born again to eternal Life.

3. By his Resurrection we are concerned in a perpetual and applying Righteousness begun, which will be consummated in eternal Life, in the Resurrection of our Bodies at the Day of Judgment.

In the *First* of these, By reason Christ is our Head, and we are his Members.

Secondly, Seeing he hath taken away Sin, the Cause of Death.

Thirdly, He received Life for us.

Fourthly, We have the same Spirit.

Fifthly, By the Man Christ Jesus came the Resurrection from the Dead. And

Lastly, The Fruit of Christ's Resurrection is to us the Fruit of all those Benefits and Glorifications of his Church-Militant on Earth: And so by rising the third Day, he hath made us Partakers of his Righteousness, Sanctification and Glorification, which his Merits only purchased to us. And thus speaking himself, he saith, *I speak unto you, that in me you might have Peace, in the World ye shall have Tribulation; but be of good Cheer, for I have overcome the World*, John 16. 53. And St. *Paul* tells us, *To this End Christ both died and arose again and revived, that he might be both the Lord of the Living and the Dead*, Rom. 14. 9.

By this we plainly see, that however our Bodies are scattered or dispersed in Death they shall unite again, and arise at the Sound of the last Trumpet by the mighty Power of God, who is able to do whatsoever pleaseth him both in Heaven and Earth; neither the Sea nor Hell shall be able to consume them, when they are summoned to appear.

The Hour shall come, saith our Saviour, *that all that are in the Grave shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and come forth.* And again, *The*

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Lord Jesus himself shall descend and come with a Shout, and the Voice of the Arch-angel, and with the Trumpet of God, and then the Dead in Christ shall first arise, &c. 1 Thes. 4. 16. And this Voice shall be heard in all Parts of the World, no Corner shall escape this Sound, and all shall be compelled to obey it; even the Fiends themselves shall hear it and tremble, and be constrained to give up the Prisoners they have a long Time confined in their dark and dismal Dungeons of Woe and Sorrow, and every secret Thing shall be revealed; all the Kings of the Earth shall appear as well as the meanest Beggar, there shall be no Exemption: Riches and worldly Honour shall signifie nothing at this general Day, but every One must be enforc'd to obey the Son of God, and hasten to Judgment without excuse or delay.

O that Men therefore would be wise and consider this, that they might now hear Christ's mild and gentle Voice in his Word, and by his Ministers calling them to Repentance, and forsake their Sins, ere they hear his terrible Voice calling them to Judgment, at the Sound of which, they must be compelled to appear be-

before him, whose Face will be a Terror to the Wicked.

Therefore let us in all Afflictions and Miseries strengthen our selves, that our Recompence and exceeding Reward, if we do well, will be in a happy Resurrection. Let us walk here, that we may verifie the Saying of St. *Paul*, viz. *Our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence we also look for our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile Body, that it might be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all Things to himself*, Phil. 3. 20, 21. And that he may be assured he will do this, if we are obedient to him; the same Apostle further saith, *But now Christ is risen from the Dead, and is become the first Fruits of them that slept, for since by Man came Death, so by Man also came the Resurrection from the Dead.*

As for the Day of the Resurrection, God hath hitherto shut it up in his eternal Counsels; but that it will certainly be the Testimony, as I think, has been made sufficiently evident; and as for the Manner of it, that he hath declar'd also to us. And those that remain alive at that Day, (as well

welhas those who shall rise from their Graves) shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air, and so shall we for ever be with the Lord, if our Sins press us not down to Destruction.

Even the Hope of a blessed Resurrection is the greatest Comfort of good Men and Women, for it is all they have to rely on for their Happiness; for then they may look up with Joy, sing because their Winter of Sorrow is over-past, and they are entering on the eternal Spring of all Felicity; and this *Tertullian* affirms, when he says, *The Confidence of a Christian is in the Resurrection from the Dead:* And *Job* in the midst of his Affliction comforted himself in saying, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall stand in the Latter Day upon the Earth; and tho' after my Skin, Worms destroy my Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God.* And what more plain than this can set forth the Joy of the Righteous, in the assured Hope they have of the Resurrection, to make them contemn and despise all their Sufferings here, seeing there they shall not fail of a Retribution that will abundantly recompence their Sorrows,

rows, when they see the Salvation of God.

Isaiah expresses the Resurrection in very emphatical Words, when he says, *Thy Dead Men shall Live, together with my dead Body shall they arise: Awake and sing ye that dwell in the Dust, for thy Dew is as the Dew of Herbs, and the Earth shall cast out the Dead; at that Time the People shall be delivered, every one that be found written in the Book*, Isa. 26. 19. And *Ezekiel* is very express, when he says, *Thus* saith the Lord, *Behold, O my People, I will open the Graves, and cause you to come out of the Graves, and bring ye into the Land of* Israel, *and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your Graves, O my People, and brought you up out of your Graves, and shall put my Spirit into you, and you shall live*, Ezek. 37. 12.

Now as to the Use of this, it is to be consider'd, let us die what Deaths we shall be appointed to, and be scattered to the four Winds under Heaven; yet for all that, our Dust shall be collected by the mighty Power of God, that the Soul may again enter the Body, and both come to Judgment: Therefore, even whilst we live, let us be always as it were knocking at

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the Gates of the Grave, and then Death shall have no Power over us to do us hurt; for if we are thinking continually we must die, it will make us so live, that we may die well, and hope for a glorious Resurrection to Life eternal; for as the Tree falls so it lies, as Death leaves us, so will Judgment find us: But in dying wickedly, however some may deceive themselves, Death is so far from ending our Misery, that on the contrary it is the Beginning of it: For we find when the Rich Man died Death was the Gate to let him into Hell Torments, the worst and most severest of all Miseries; therefore let us take heed how we rashly wish for Death, e're we are prepared for it, as often foolish People do when they are under Affliction, as vainly supposing it will lull them in an eternal Slumber, and at once ease all their Miseries: For if they die in their Sins, it had been better for them never to have been born than to die; and every Creature else is in a better State of dying, because they cease to be, and their Pains are at an End; but it is not so with Man, he has yet an Account remaining to Reckon for at the Day of Judgment.

As to the second Use of this Doctrine of the Resurrection, it ought to fix Consolation on the Minds of good Men, seeing by it their Redemption draws nigh, so that tho' it be at a distance, their Eyes ought ever to be fixed upon it, because then they shall receive their Recompence of Reward for all the Labours, Sorrows, Miseries, Scorns and Reproaches they undergo in this World; seeing the more their Afflictions are here, the greater shall their Happiness be hereafter; for then they will shine as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Heavenly Father, and be cloathed in the precious Robes of Christ's Righteousness, and be crowned with a Crown of immortal Glory, *&c.*

As to the third Use, the Thoughts of the Resurrection, ought to be of exceeding Consolation to good Men, because Death shall not have Power to keep their Bodies in the Prison of the Grave, but they shall rise gloriously, and as Christ the Captain of their Salvation has done, triumph over Death and Hell, in their rising State to Life eternal; and this should make us use our Bodies honestly, and be very cautious to keep them undefiled, as being

being the living Temples of the Holy Ghost, who is to sanctifie them, that of corruptable Bodies they may rise incorruptable and glorious Bodies.

Fourthly, Seeing that the Word of God assures us, that whatsoever Death we die, we shall rise again, and that those that are in Christ only shall rise to Life and Glory: This must teach us not to be sorry for those that die in the Lord, because they rest from their Labours, and shall rise again to be everlasting Happy; for hear what St. *Paul* says, *I would not have you ignorant, Brethren, concerning those that are asleep, that you should not mourn as those that have no Hope*, 1 Thes. 4. 3. And this may suffice as to these Particulars.

Now further St. *John* says in this Matter, viz. *And they were judged every one according to their Works.*

This is often repeated by the holy Spirit, and worthy of all Remark; for the Reason it is so often mention'd, is because not without Difficulty we are brought to believe this Point of being judged according to our Works. Oh! It is a very hard Matter to convince Men and Women of the Truth of this, that they must give an Account

Account according to their Works; for certainly were they sensible of it, many Thousands would not live as they do in all manner of Prophaeneſs and Wickedneſs; but surely their Hearts must quake and tremble, to consider that even their ungodly Works must one Day come to Judgment, and their Reward be suitable to them.

How needful is it then, that all who are so blinded with Ignorance, and easily deluded by the Suggestions of the Devil, and their own wicked Imaginations, to pray to God for the Guidance and Assistance of his holy Spirit in all their Ways, and to soften their stoney Hearts, that they may see the Error of their Ways, and acknowledge with the true Penitent Sinner, the Judgment and Wrath of God due unto them for ever, and to render all possible Praise and Thanks for the daily Preservation of their Lives; so shall they enjoy a quiet Conscience, and not only be comforted and refreshed in this Life, but end their Days with full Assurance of a joyful Resurrection in the Life to come, as the Consummation of all Happiness.

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The laſt Great ASSIZE.

The Fourth Sermon; ſetting forth Matters relating to Death and Hell, and alſo of the Joys of Heaven.

Rev. v. 14, 15.

And Death and Hell were caſt into the Lake of Fire, that is the ſecond Death.
And whoſoever was not found written in the Book of Life, was caſt into the Lake of Fire.

HAving laid down very plainly who the Judge is, with the manner of his coming to Judgment, alſo who ſhall be judged, even both Small and Great, like wiſe the Evidence and Records by which all muſt be tryed and ſentenc'd, even the Books of Conſcience, of Life, and the revealed Word of God. It now remains that I come to Treat of the Execution of that Judgment upon all the Ungodly, who in this Life have deſpiſed the Ways of Righte-

Righteousness, and turn'd their Backs upon Admonition and Good, that should have been a Light to them, and a Lanthorn to their Ways, so that they might have walked honestly, and honestly to have prevented their falling into everlasting Torments, by the Power of the Sentence that will be pronounc'd against them according to their Works: For, Oh what a terrible thing will it be, what Horror and Astonishment must it raise in their Souls, when they shall hear Christ say to them, *Depart from me, ye Cursed, into Hell-fire, there everlastingly to remain with the Devil and his Angels*, &c. when immediately the Executioner of the Sentence shall follow?

And now because St. *John* says, *That Death and Hell shall be cast into the Lake of Fire*, which is the second Death; it will not be amiss by the Way, e're I come to other Particulars, that in some manner I explain the Meaning of this, because some have made an Objection to these Words as improper, alledging, that Death is not a Body, nor indeed any Body but only the Consequence of Man's Dying, and going out of this Life; and as for Hell, say they, how can it be cast into it self, when

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it is there already? Which must be meant by the *Lake of Fire:* And as for the second Death, how can they dye, who are doomed to live eternally in Torments; and wish to dye, but cannot; for that would be an ease and end of all their Misery?

To this I answer. Here by Hell and Death, is not meant Hell it self, nor Death it self, but the Persons who have entailed themselves Heirs to Hell and Death, by their wicked Courses and reprobate Living in this World; the Words being spoken Methaphorically, referring to those that dye in their Sins; and as for the second Death, tho' they do not actually dy again, yet being dead to all Good, the pains and torments they shall suffer without Remedy or End, is taken for Death, because it is worse than Death it self, which especially by the Wicked. even here is accounted the worst of Evils; and they would fly any where to avoid it, were it possible, and these are they that with their Weight of Sin about them, shall be cast into the *Lake of Fire.* Who then, if they did but rightly consider, would not labour by all manner of Ways to avoid this endless Misery, for as the Prophet says,

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Who can dwell with everlasting Burnings? And yet such as are Heirs to Hell and Death, must endure them; they must be cast into the Lake of Fire, a Fire that cannot be quenched, being continually blown into a Seven-fold Heat, by the angry Breath of the Almighty, the Fuel whereof is never consumed, no more than the Damned that must endure it, who are kept by his Power fresh for eternal Pain; and beside this, the Worm of Conscience that never dieth, will be always Gnawing and Tormenting them perpetually, bringing into their Remembrance the Happiness they have lost, for vain and idle Trifles and Shadows; setting at the same Time before their Eyes the Horrors of the dismal Place that encloses them, and what endless Torments they are like to endure, making them gnash their Teeth for Pain, and Curse the Day of their Birth, but all to no Purpose, for they are for ever shut in; the Gates once shut, never to be opened again; and thus much for discussing these Points may suffice.

And now I shall proceed to the next Verse, where this inspir'd Evangelist says, *That whosoever is not found written in the*

Book

Book of Life, shall be cast into the Lake of Fire. Now as for this Fire, it cannot reasonably be taken for a material Fire, tho' that is dreadful enough; but for something far exceeding it, because it never shall go out, nor never consume what is doomed to abide in it, tho' it torments with unspeakable Torment: Then let us consider it the most dreadful of all Things, that is the second Death, not only of the Body, but of the Body and Soul together in their Damnation for evermore.

Then happy are they that escape this, and only die the first Death, which is the Death of the Body, as a Debt due to Nature; for there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ, the second Death shall not reach them; or as St. *John* says, *They shall not be hurt of the second Death.*

As for what is more plainly meant by the second Death, I come now briefly to handle it:

First, It is a perpetual Banishment from God's Presence, and from all that can be called good or delightful, to have the Company of infernal Fiends, always upbraiding and tormenting to those that are so unspeakably unhappy, and beyond all expression

pression of Words, so miserable as to fall into it: O what a woful Death is this, that Men by their Sins should procure their Banishment from the blessed Presence of God, and from the Glory of his Power, and be pluck'd and hall'd from so infinite a Blessing by the Devils that have been chiefly instrumental to debar them of it, in causing them to rush upon Sin like a Horse upon a charged Spear! When our Saviour tells us, *All the Happiness of the Righteous, shall be in standing in the Beholding of God, and being in his Presence for evermore*, Mat. 5. 8.

Then what Misery and Woe must it be to the Wicked, not only to be cast out of his Presence, but to be cast likewise into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels? Since the Loss alone is exceeding miserable without any further Punishment; because God is the alone Fountain of Life, and whatever is out of his Presence, cannot contain the least Joyment of it.

Again, This Loss of God, whose Presence is, and at whose right Hand is *Pleasures for evermore*, is a Fall from the highest Happiness into everlasting Perdition, and

and a second Degree of the Misery of those that depart from his amiable Presence, is the Company they shall have for ever with the Devil and his Angels, according as our Saviour himself hath expressed it, *viz. Depart from me ye Cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, Mat. 25. 14. And this Sentence includes all the Woe and Misery that can befal a wretched Sinner; having in these Words the Curse of Christ upon him, and even of all the holy Angels, Saints, and all the Blessed in Heaven, who shall likewise rejoyce in the just Sentence of the righteous Judge; nor shall his Companions the Devils be wanting to rejoyce, that by their Seducements they have withdrawn him from God, to make him Partaker in their Torments; who, because they cannot do Good, make it their whole Study and Delight to do all the Evil they can; that as themselves are inseparably fallen into ruin, they may bring unthinking Man to fall likewise from his Obedience, that he may partake of their Miseries: Nay more, a Sinner shall here have the Curses of those himself hath deluded, enticed and drawn away to Sin, so whereby

they have forfeited their everlasting Happiness, and nothing shall salute his Ears but Shricks, Howling and Lamentations, Cursings and Blasphemings, *&c.*

The horror of the Place shall add likewise to their Misery, being every where full of ghastly Terror, for which Reason the Scripture calls it Hell, *Tophet*, the bottomless Pit, the Place of endless Perdition, the fiery Lake, and the like.

But the greater *Misery* it adds, is because it is eternal Punishment; that those who are condemn'd to it, must suffer without all hope of End, and their Punishment be without Intermission: For says St. *John*, *The Smoak of their Torments shall ascend evermore, and they shall have no rest Day nor Night*, Rev. 14. 11. This is a Punishment unexpressible under the Wrath of an angry and incensed God, who will never look with an Eye of Compassion on those that are shut up in those Dungeons of Misery; for they shall not only lose his glorious Presence, in which is fulness of Joy for evermore, but be perpetually tormented in unextinguishable flames.

Now tho' none wish to have this dreadful Lot or Portion, and every Man and

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Woman thinks it will not fall to his or her Share, tho' they delay and put off Repentance to old Age, or perhaps to the last Moment of Life; yet certain it is, there are Marks set upon those that shall fall under this heavy Pressure, and those that have this miserable Portion, are the Fearful and Unbelieving, and Abominable, and Murtherers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Lyars, *&c.* For these without extraordinary Repentance, and God's great Mercy, shall certainly have their part in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone, which is the second Death; by which it is plain, that all who die impenitent are included, and will have an impassible Gulf fixed between 'em, and those whom a true Sense of their Sins touched, to bring them to a sincere Repentance.

O that Men and Women would consider these things in time, and not cast away themselves for gaining Riches, or Pleasure, or Honour, whilst they neglect the most weighty things necessary to Salvation, which is timely Repentance, and living up to those Rules that appointed them to work out their Salvation, whilst,

it is yet to Day, lest the Night of Death come upon them unawares, wherein no Man can work.

Now to Fear and Tremble at these things, that it may work in our Hearts a godly Sorrow for Sin, leading to Repentance, the same St. *John* tells us in the sixth Verse of this Chapter, *That such as would escape this Punishment must do so.* For, says he, *Blessed and Holy is he that hath his part in the first Resurrection, for on such the second Death shall have no Power, but they shall be Priests of God and Christ, and shall reign with him,* &c.

By this it is evident, that such as are to escape eternal Condemnation, are they that have their part in the first Resurrection, and that is by rising out of the Grave of Sin, to the Newness of Life, which is otherwise called dying unto Sin, and living unto Christ, which is the first happy Resurrection; for St. *Paul* tells us, *You that were dead in Sin, hath he quickened; and we are buried with Christ in Baptism; that like as he riseth again to the Glory of his Father, so even we should walk in Newness of Life,* Ephes. 2. and Rom. 6. 6.

To know whether this may be aptly

applied to us, we are seriously to enter into the Closet of our Souls, and there to examine our selves, whether we are risen from Sin in this Life, to a Newness and Holiness of Life; if so, there is great Sign we have attained to the first Resurrection; and then we ought to be very careful and diligent in taking heed to our ways, that we fall not again into Sin, that may notwithstanding deprive us of so great a Blessing; for if this first Resurrection be continued to us to the end, then in the second we shall be owned and receiv'd as the Children of God, and made Co-heirs with Christ; those who have not this Testimony, may be said to have a double Death, and but one Resurrection, as dying in Sin here, which is the first Death of the Body, and dying as is is called an eternal Death hereafter, which is the second Death both of Body and Soul: For as such had no part in the first Resurrection, to the second Resurrection is only to call them to the Judgment of the second Death.

Therefore let every one, I say, labour to be sure of the first Resurrection, and then the second will be pleasant and easy

on them; and as for the second Death, it will not hurt them, but they shall enter from Judgment into Heaven, with triumphant Songs, and remain there in Bliss for ever and ever, accompanied with Cherubims, Seraphims, Arch-Angels, Angels, Saints and all the holy Company of blessed Spirits.

But again, whoever was not found written in the Book of Life, was cast into the Lake of Fire.

In the foregoing Verse, the Execution of the last Judgment is plainly demonstrated, also who they are that shall undergo the Punishment, and who on the other hand shall be exempted from Condemnation; and that the Places for Rewards and Punishments, are only two, *viz.* Heaven and Hell; For as St. *Paul* saith, *the Elect shall have Eternal Life, but they that be Reprobates, shall be cast into the Lake of Fire.*

As for the Elect, those are they that are chosen in the Lord Jesus, and have their Names written in the Book of Life, which is the Record of Heaven; and as in their Living they have differ'd from the Wicked, so in their future State they

they shall be far different from them, for their Portion shall be endless Happiness, and their eternal Reward such as the Eye of Man never saw, nor has it entred into Man's Heart to conceive; seeing to consumate their Bliss, God shall be all in all to them, and that is every Thing they can wish or desire, and even beyond what they are able to conceive; since every Child of God shall have as it were a Kingdom, exceeding far in Glory, all the Kingdoms of the World.

Again, In this Kingdom there shall be eternal Plenty, God will give them the *Water of Life* out of the Rivers of his Pleasure, and spiritual Food as from a boundless Store; there shall be neither Hunger nor Thirst, but all shall be satisfied, all the Defects of Body and Soul shall be supplied and satiated with every good Thing that is desirable: Here indeed we see God but in part, and that dimly as thro' a Glass, but there we shall behold him Face to Face, and see him as he is; then if *Moses*'s Face shined in seeing him dimly on the Mount, that the Children of *Israel* were not able to speak with him for the Lustre of it, without a Veil cast over it, how shall their

Faces much more shine when they behold God in his full Glory, and see him as he is, living in his Presence, and reigning with him for ever.

It will be a wonderful Glory doubtless to the Elect of God, that they shall bear the Similitude of Jesus Christ, the second Person in the blessed Trinity; for St. *Paul* tells us, *He shall change our vile Bodies, and make them like unto his glorious Body*, Phil. 2. 24. Then to remain incorruptable and unchangeable for ever.

Therefore let every one make his earnest Supplication to God, that he would graciously be pleased to be a Fountain of ever living Water to besprinkle our Hearts and Souls, for his Son Jesus Christ's sake, and above all Things endeavour to seek the Kingdom of God; for if that be once obtain'd, there is no need of any further Happiness, for that will fully compleat all the Measure of Joy, even to the over-flowing our Hearts and Souls; but if this be omitted and lost to us, tho' we should gain the whole World, it would prove but Madness and Folly, for that would soon leave us; so that having no Place in Heaven, there remains nothing

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but Hell and Damnation to receive us.

As it is not possible for the Tongues of Men or Angels fully to express the Joys of Heaven; so on the other hand, they would fall short to tell the unconceivable Loss of such a Happiness, as to the degree it must render the Loser miserable: But to gain the one and avoid the other, is the main end for which Man receives Life and Being; therefore all the Study and Labour of our Lives, ought to be employ'd in making our Calling and Election sure, that so when we part hence, we may not fail to be receiv'd into the eternal Habitations of Bliss and Happiness, to enjoy the *Beatifick Vision*, and lie down at Ease in his Fold, who is the Shepherd of our Souls, and watches always over his Sheep for their exceeding Advantage; Who then would be out of this blessed Fold, wherein there is so much Care taken of them, and such Blessings and Comfort to be found? considering further, that those who are out of it, have no place of abode but in Misery: for all that are not of Christ's Flock, are the Goats on the left hand, even wretched and ungodly Sin-

ners, and to think what the latter End of all such will be, tho' now they seem little to regard it themselves, is enough to make any considering Man's Heart quake and tremble, seeing the Holy Ghost has expressly told us, *That all such shall after Sentence be cast into the Lake of Fire, which is the second Death, and that a very terrible one.* And also Christ saith to such, *Go ye Cursed into everlasting Fire.*

Now as to this Lake, what it more fully is, and the Torments it will inflict on the Wicked, tho' I have already spoken to, yet take it further thus; briefly under these three Heads,

First, The Extremity of it. *Secondly*, The Perpetuity of it. And *Thirdly*, That from it there is no Redemption or Release.

As for the Extremity of it. The Pains and Horror are intolerable, beyond all Expression, if they could possibly be avoided; but as they cannot, they must be endured, they must be tormented in those Flames.

As to the Perpetuity of it, it's Endless, for so long as God is God, so long shall the Damned be tormented in this Flame, and that is to all Eternity.

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As to its being Remediless, certain it is, that Christ having once died for all Men, will not die again; and without such a Redemption (as can never be more expected) the angry Wrath of God will not be appeased towards those that have fallen under it, and are cast for their Sins into this Lake of Fire; nor will there be any Mercy or Compassion extended towards them, or their Cries and sorrowful Lamentations move the least Regard.

This seriously consider'd, one would think should make a stony-hearted Sinner melt in Floods of Tears, and cry mightily Day and Night unto the Lord, until his Pardon be sealed; that as *Dives* said of his Brethren, he might not come unto this Place of Torment. It should scare him with the very Thoughts of his Horror from all his vain Pleasures and Delights, to become a new Man, and in time by a stedfast Faith lay hold on Christ Jesus, that he might at last enter with him into his Rest.

Thus having sufficiently spoken of the Lake of Fire, and the Torment all wicked Men and Women, without a timely Repentance are unavoidably like to suffer,

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and from which, neither the Rocks nor Mountains can hide or shelter them; so that it might move all such as thro' fear (if not for Love of their poor Souls, to lay aside every Sin that does so easily beset them, and so avoid coming to this dismal Place of Horror:

The next Thing I am to handle, is a more pleasing Subject, which is the Joys of Heaven, and the Happiness of the Blest that shall dwell there for evermore.

As for the Kingdom of Heaven, it must on all Hands be concluded to be a very glorious Place, as being the Residence of that God, who with Glory fills the Heavens and the Earth; which Consideration made holy *David* cry out as in a Rapture, *O how amiable are thy Tabernacles, thou Lord of Hosts!* It is a spiritual Kingdom not made with Hands, it is past all Imagination, and contains in it all that can be wish'd or desir'd. St. *John* describes it to be adorn'd with all the glorious Things that are desirable on Earth, as that the twelve Gates of the *New Jerusalem*, the *Heavenly Canaan* are so many entire Pearls, the Walls are precious Stones, the Pavement Gold, glistering like Glass; and that

that there needs no Sun to light it by Day, nor Moon by Night; for the Lord is the Light thereof, and his Glory shines in it with transcendant Brightness; that for the Refreshment of the Saints of God, there is the River, even the Well-spring of Life, and streaming Pleasures that flow for evermore: *There*, as holy *David* says, *we shall be satisfied with the Abundance of God's House, and he shall give us Waters of his Pleasure, as out of a River*; and even Blessings upon Blessings shall be heaped upon his Saints; and tho' they may differ in Glory, as one Star differ from another, yet all shall shine very glorious, every one be full, and no Emptiness be found. If *Nebuchadnezzar* could boast, *Is not this great* Babel *that I have built for mine Honour, and the Majesty of the Kingdom?* What then may they boast, who dwell in the Pallaces of Heaven, whose *Maker and Builder is God*, of which very glorious Things are spoken?

Then if *Abraham* left his Country and his Father's House for a Land he knew not; and *Moses* refused to be called the Son of *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, despising all the Glories of the Court of *Egypt*, and the Children of *Israel*'s Journey through a barren

barren and desert Wilderness to the *Earthly Canaan*; how much more should we leave *all* to Journey towards this Heavenly Country, whose Glories and Pleasantness are so ravishing and amazing even to be related to our outward Ears, which is a dim and faint Representation or Shadow of what it really is in its own Excellency; for he that is clogged and chained to this lower World by sordid Thoughts cannot arise to it. Therefore let us shake off all earthly Things that incumber us in our Journey to the *Heavenly Canaan*, that we may run with Patience, and our Souls pant after it, as the Hart panteth after the Water-brook in a thirsty Land; that having left the Barrenness of the Wilderness of this World, our Souls may be refreshed with the Streams of the Water of Life for evermore.

And to set out in this Journey, let us make haste to reconcile our selves to God by a true and sincere Repentance, running into the Arms of Christ, who stretcheth them forth to embrace us; returning and submitting our selves to his Guidance, that we may come with him in our Hearts by Faith, and plead his Merits, and by that

that means finding Acceptance with God, have Admittance into his glorious Kingdom, wherein is all Fulness of Joy and Pleasures for evermore. And thus much may briefly suffice for the Place, and a dim Prospect of the Glories and Happiness it contains, for those that thro' the Merits, Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, shall have their Lot fall in so fair a Land. And now I shall proceed to speak of the heavenly Joys the Souls of good Men and Women shall possess when they enter into the Kingdom of their Father.

As to the Commodities that belong to the *Heavenly Jerusalem*, they principally belong to, and affect the Soul as the chief and noblest Part of Man; and in the next Place to the Body, for that at the Resurrection being re-united to the Soul, shall with it partake of this inestimable and endless Happiness, that the whole Man may receive his full Perfection, as he was first created perfect in his State of Innocency, e'er by his Fall he defaced the Image of God lively stamp'd, and which here shall be renew'd as at first; and whereas the supremest Delight of a godly Mind is to serve

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and praise God particularly in his Church, and the Congregation assembled to worship and adore his holy Name; in this *Heavenly Jerusalem*, there will be no need of a Church or Temple; tho' S. *John* says, *he saw a Temple*, yet it was no other, as he further expresses it, then the *Presence* of God himself; who shall be to the Just instead of a Church or Temple, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the Temple thereof; and therefore why should Men and Women be so backward to enter into this Joy, where we shall have in that Cœlestial Mansion, no Joy by Weight or Measure, but in the over-flowing Abundance even to excess, and this Joy to a pious Soul, is as Wings to carry it thro' all the Miseries it meets with in this Vale of Tears, whilst it remains here in the Body, as in Prison, labouring to be released that it may fly to its Heavenly Home.

Thus we find the Joy of the Soul in the Heavenly Kingdom shall be all in all, in the Enjoyment of the Presence of God, before whom in a Rapture of Joy, and humble *Acknowledgement* of their infinite Felicity, the Elders (that is, the Saints of God)

God) who sat on Thrones, fell down and *worshipped him that liveth for ever*, and casting their Crowns before his Throne, so even shall all the Blessed do, singing *Praises* and *Allelujahs*: For we further find that the Hundred and Forty Four Thousand, who had the Name of God in their Foreheads, did sing a new Song before the Throne, and no Man could learn that but themselves that were redeem'd from the Earth; and there were those cloathed in white Garments, having Palms in their Hands, who cry'd with a loud Voice, *Salvation be ascrib'd to him that sitteth upon the Seat of our God*, and these fell before the Seat on their Faces and worshipped God, saying, *Amen, Blessing, and Glory, and Wisdom, and Thanks, and Honour and Might be unto our God for evermore.*

And as these did, so shall all those do that come before God's Presence with Souls full of Joy and Thankfulness, for being filled with abundance of all spiritual Comfort, they shall not cease to Praise him Day and Night, who is the Author and Giver of all their Happiness, for to them all Grief and Sorrow shall be utter Strangers, all Tears shall be wiped away

away from their Eyes, and the Voice of Mourning shall no more be heard, every Place shall sound with Praises and Thanksgiving for the great Mercies and Benefits received at the Hands of God.

The Contemplation of this *Felicity* made holy *David* long to come into the Possession of it; when he says, *When shall I come and appear before the Presence of God? For certainly it is an unspeakable Happiness to be in his Presence:* Which all good Christians also ought to long for, and earnestly desire; being it is the Consumation of all they can breathe and pant after as an Ease of all Misery.

Behold, saith the Prophet *Isaiah* (in the Person of God) *my Servants shall rejoyce and sing for Joy of Heart. I will Joy in my People, and the Voice of Weeping shall be no more heard, nor the Voice of Crying*, Isaiah 61. 13. And again, *For God shall*, saith St. *John*, *wipe away Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Sorrow, nor any more Pains, for the first Things are past*, Rev. 21. 4. That is, their Sufferings in this Life are over and gone, and now no more Sorrow, but Joy and Gladness remains for ever, abundantly to over-recompence all

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the Sufferings the Righteous undergo in this Life, for beyond it none can reach them; and in the Enjoyment of God's Presence we shall have whatever we can wish for, and abundantly more, for he will be all things unto us, causing our Souls to be enlighten'd, and shine with Righteousness, Holiness, and all Spiritual Graces, the Consideration of which should of necessity raise up our Souls to a cheerful Undergoing whatever may be inflicted on us, in this Life: And thus much briefly for the Joys of the Soul in Heaven; now I come to give you a Light into those of the Body, which it shall partake together with the Soul.

As for the Heavenly Joys of the Body, the Commodities and Priviledges contributing to make them full, are many: First, It shall not have need of any thing to support it, that in its corruptible State is requisite for his Subsistance, nor sustain any of those Infirmities, that it is here incident to, neither shall any Night shadow it, but on the contrary, the Presence of God shall always illuminate it, and give it a perpetual Day, far more bright and glorious than the Sun is capable of doing, whilst it remains below; its Food shall

shall be spiritual Nourishment; and its Cloathing the white Robes of Christ's Righteousness; for as St. *John* says, *They shall not be Hungry, neither shall they be Thirsty, neither shall the Heat smite them, nor the Sun, for he that hath Compassion on them shall lead them to Springs of the Water of Life, and there the Body shall be fearless from Hurt and Danger from the Enemy; no secret Contrivances, or Circumventions shall molest its Quiet; but it shall rest always at ease in the pleasant Vales of Heaven; Death shall be swallowed up in Victory, and have no more Power over it.* There it may freely eat of the *Tree of Life*, without any Danger of forfeiting its Happiness. There it shall enjoy Mirth without Sadness, Health without Sickness, Strength without Weakness, Life without Labour, Light without Darkness, Felicity without Abatement or End; and all Goodness pure, and unmix'd with Evil. It shall always flourish in Youth and Beauty that never fade or decay; there it shall have Joy without ceasing, Pleasure without Pain, Happiness without Alteration or Change; and in fine, whatever can contribute to a perfect Felicity; for it shall be freed from all Corruption, Mor-

Mortality or other Casualty; and all it has to do, is to Praise and Magnifie the Living God, who does all this and abundance more for it, who shall set his Seal upon it, imprinting his Name in its Forehead, as a Mark that it is one of his beloved Children, and to hear the ravishing Melody and Harmony of the Angels, antheming the Throne of God, whilst it self joyns in the holy Choir, singing continually Praises, Songs, and Allelujahs to him that liveth for ever and ever.

Let us therefore with all our Hearts turn to the Lord betimes, that when we die, this may be our happy Portion. *David* considering this abundant Blessedness, says, *O how great is thy Goodness which thou hast laid up for them that Love and Fear thee!* And again, *When shall I come and appear before God?* Certainly there can be nothing so bitter or sharp in this Life but the Contemplation of heavenly Happiness will sweeten and allay: Therefore, let no Man that lives uprightly, stagger at Tribulation, or fear to dye, or doubt the Joys of Heaven will recompence him for all his Sufferings were they ten thousand times more then can befal him: And

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can any Man if he rightly considers, expect to gain so great a Happiness, by being negligent and slothful, putting off his Repentance from Day to Day, even to old Age, the Dregs of Life, or a Death-bed Repentance, when if he can repent, it is yet very uncertain whether it will prove acceptable or not, who loves the early and chearful Penitent, often calling to us, *My Son give me thy Heart*; that is, to the young Ones, *To Remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth*; for whoever purchased an inestimable Jewel with Dross?

Then enter early into the Church-Militant, and begin your spiritual Warfare betimes, *put on the whole Armour of God*, to resist the Temptations of Satan, that so overcoming, in the end you may receive the Crown; and then living or dying, *Godliness* will be to you *great Gain*, it will heap up for you Treasure in Heaven, that none shall be able to deprive you off; consider, the time of this Life is but short at the longest, which should make you more eager to gain those Joys that shall never have an end; all things we find here uncertain, but there are assuredly confirmed to those that strive for them.

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St. *John* tells us, *That the Tree of Life bear twelve several Sorts of Fruit, bearing every Month*; and this is aptly apply'd to the Diversity of Joys, those that strive to enter at the streight Gate, and take Heaven by Violence, shall be possess'd of as the Reward of their Labour and Sufferings, so that there is a continual Change of Delights, still pleasing the Mind and ravishing the Senses with immortal Pleasures.

And thus have I shew'd you the Joys of Heaven, as they are revealed to us, or as our Imagination can reach them, tho' in reallity they surpass all that can be said of them, as much as the Sun in its Lustre does the smallest glimmering Star; for no Tongue is able to express them as they are in themselves, till the Party who would do it comes to the Possession of them: St. *Paul* being wrap'd but unto the third Heaven saw and heard Things unutterable; himself seems not able to reveal what he there saw and heard, and therefore in a manner he passes it over in Silence, as a Thing unlawful for a Man to speak, or as some Translations have it, beyond Man's Utterance: For indeed all

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the learned Men in the World are not capable to give a lively Description of the Joys of Heaven, as in themselves they really are; for no mortal Eye hath seen them, or Heart can conceive them: Then how can any Tongue declare them in their full *Perfection?* Yet what has been said may in a good Measure suffice for Edification, Comfort and Instruction; for what we do know, we may gather for our Good, and for our necessary Information, leaving off to search further than God will give Understanding, for hidden Things belong to him alone: Yet here is enough to enflame our Love, and raise our Desires to long and wish for them, and so consequently to spur us on in using the Means whereby we may attain to them in his good Time, who has provided them for all that Love and Fear him, walking uprightly, according to his Word, and in a ready Obedience to his holy Commandments.

And now I shall proceed to give some Instructions for our Use; as,

First, Let us learn to grow out of Love with the present World, and the Things thereof, which will stand us in no stead at the last Day, and tho' Necessity and the

Needs of Nature requires us to use many Things, yet let us be careful to use them as not to abuse them, nor our selves in the Use of them; let us be Sober, Modest and Chaste in all our Conversation; not toiling our selves to heap up Riches, when we know not who shall gather them after us, or if we did, it would nothing avail us in the Hour of Death, much less in the Day of Judgment, when all former Things shall pass away; but let our Minds be rather continually fix'd upon our latter End; let us labour to fight the good Fight, that so finishing our Course, we may joyfully lay down this mortal Life, in exchange for that Life which is immortal, which will place us in the full Fruition of those heavenly Joys that fully satisfie the Soul and Body, with all that is delightful and comfortable, that can be wished for or imagin'd by the largest Mind or Capacity Man is now endowed with, or shall be possest of hereafter.

This Time of heavenly Joy is in Scripture aptly compared to the Harvest; the Psalmist says, *They shall reap in Joy*; and again, *Whoso goeth on his Way weeping, and beareth good Seed, shall come and*

bring his Sheaves with them. And we see what Care every Husband-man taketh to provide good and choice Seed, that his Harvest may be plentiful: Our Seed is our Thoughts, our Words, our Deeds and our Conversation, and as we sow them in this World, we shall reap in the other, for the Apostle minds us not to be deceived, *God is not mocked, for whatever a Man soweth, that shall he reap; for he that soweth to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life everlasting*, Gal. 6 7. As for the Date of this Life, (wherein we must sow our Seed, if at all we intend it, and it will be so either good or bad) it is but short; however, if we sow good Seed of virtuous Actions, the Remembrance of a Life well led will be a Comfort to us for ever, and in the End of Time prove an endless Harvest, to supply us with a blessed Crop of Joy and Pleasures, springing up to Life and Immortality, still encreasing, but never diminishing.

Be careful then in this, and abstain from fleshly Lusts, bridle them and keep them under, for they war against the Spirit:

But

But if you seek the things that are above, then are ye *risen with Christ. Seek* therefore *those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right Hand of God*, with all Diligence. And the Apostle exhorts us to set our Affections on things which are above, and not on things which are on the Earth, and mortify our immoderate Affections, and evil Concupiscence, for it is expressly said, *No unclean thing shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: But blessed are the pure in Heart for they shall see God.*

Let us then cleanse our selves from all Filthiness and Defilements of the Flesh and Spirit, and grow up into full Holiness in the Fear of God, for they that thus do his Will, shall enter into the *New Jerusalem*, and their right shall be to the *Tree of Life*; but without shall be Dogs, and all unclean Persons, *Rev.* 22. 14. O strive ye then to enter in at the streight Gate which leadeth to Life, and not at the wide Gate which leadeth to Destruction.

Now I may add unto these many, one of the greatest Joys of all, which is God's Mercy, which is evident to us in this Life, and is that which brings us to *enter in at the streight Gate which leads to Life everla-*

sting: For without this, none could be able to enter, for in the strictness of his Justice, our Sins would altogether debar us of all the Happiness we aim at in Heaven: But we find in every Respect, he is a God of infinite Mercy, a God of Long-Sufferance, Patience and Forbearance, a God slow to Anger, and of great Loving-kindness; not willing that any should be destroyed, but that all should be saved, if upon the terms offered them, they'll endeavour to *make their Calling and Election sure*, by *turning from the Evil of their Ways*, and turning to him by a true and unfeigned Repentance, who is their most gracious and merciful God.

O let every one then beware how they abuse this Mercy, which can only open the Gates of Heaven to them, and give them free Admittance to the Tree of Life, least when they stand in need of it, it withdraw it self, and his severe Justice takes place to their Destruction; but rather let us ever pray, that the Lord of his Goodness would direct our Steps to his Throne of Mercy, and cloaths us with that Garment of Mercy, that may shroud us from his fiery Indignation, when his Anger

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waxes hot against Evil-doers, to cut them off.

And now I come last of all, for a Conclusion and Admonition, in brief (having already perswaded you to close with God's Mercy) to point out the right way to you, that your latter end may be Peace. The Comforts of which brings all the Joy and Happiness I have mentioned, as an exceeding Recompence for all our Travel and Labour in this Life.

First, Take particular Notice, that by the Vertue of Christ's Death, Death ceases to be any more a Terror or Affrightment, but is made a kind Friend, to open the Door, and let the Soul into a happy Eternity, seeing Christ is the Key of the Grave, and hath before-hand open'd the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers; for the Day of Death can only be terrible when it is joyn'd with God's Wrath and Indignation against Sinners, who are not defended with the Shield of Faith, when he approaches; for always in dying we should rejoyce in the Lord, seeing the Corruption of our Nature is thereby quite abolished, and our Sanctification then accomplished.

by Death there is a Removal of present Miseries, and by it future are prevented; and we shall (if our Faith be stedfast in Christ Jesus) eternally remain in unutterable Felicity; for being once certainly assured in our Consciences that we are in Christ, let Death seize us when it will, we shall still remain in the Covenant, and be re-united with him, and taken up unto everlasting Life; so that whether we wake or sleep, or what thing soever we do, let the end of our Life be still in our Remembrance, and our Imaginations suggest to us, that we hear the Sound of the last Trumpet, and see the Dead arising to Judgment; and this will be a Hindrance to our Course in sinning, either for Love or Fear, we shall forbear to offend God, to the utmost of our Power; and indeed he requires no more than a willing Mind, and earnest Endeavour to serve him, for if we repent, and amend our Lives, as far as it is possible for us to do, we may confidently trust and rely upon his Mercies for our Salvation at the last Day, nay, comfortably say with St. *Paul*, *I live not but Christ liveth in me*; which will appear if truly so, by the Testimony of our sanctified Con-

Conscience, that Christ our Redeemer by his holy Spirit governs in us, according to his good Will and Pleasure.

Seeing then we must of Necessity all die, and that Christ is only terrible to the Wicked, what is but our own Faults by delaying and putting off our Repentance till it is too late that gives him his Sting? St. *Paul* having overcome all Fear of Death, joyfully cries out, *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?* And indeed it is the Joy and Comfort of all good Men, that at the Hour of Death they can say thus, and with a willing Resignation, commit their Spirits into the Hands of God that gave them.

Certain it is, that the often Meditating upon it, makes it as it were familiar with us; for as he who hath not his Eye steady upon the Mark, can never be a good Shooter, so no more can a Man live well who hath not his Mind fix'd upon the Day of his Death; then consequently he cannot die well, for the Terrors of Death will be so affrighting and astonishing to him, that his Mind will be disordered, and fear will push him on the Horrors of Despair to the Shipwrecking of his Soul.

Now after Death certainly follows Judgment, as I have in a great Measure already shown, for our Bodies are but like Seed sown in the Earth to spring up again, tho' the Nature of 'em will be changed in a Moment, even in the Twinkling of an Eye at the last Trumpet; for when the Trumpet shall sound, every one shall hear it, and every one shall start from their Graves to come to Judgment; then shall these corruptable Bodies of ours put on Incorruption, and of natural Bodies they shall be made glorious Bodies, tho' the Earth has detain'd them many Thousand Years, and they are before this Resurrection moulder'd into common Dust, which is a Divine Work and past our Understanding as to the Manner of it, therefore let us rather admire his infinite Goodness, than be too curious or nice in the Methods he will use to reduce scattered Dust into glorified Bodies, to unite again with the Souls that were so long departed from them.

That Man must die common Experience shews; scarce a Night passes but we meet one or other going to their long home; and the Sound of the Bell daily informs

forms us, some one or other is departed out of this Life, no more to revive till the General Day of the *Resurrection*; and indeed Life is so uncertain, that it is often compared to things of momentary Duration, as a Span long, a Vapour, a Shadow, Smoak, the Grass that withereth, and the Flower that soon fadeth, *&c.* If so, what Assurance has any one to lean on, that expects to be eternally happy, for their putting off their Repentance from day to day, when as they know not what a day will bring forth; Death like Sleep steals upon us at unawares, and our lying down at Night, and rising in the Morning, is an Emblem of *Death* and the *Resurrection*. How many, who have promised themselves long Life have been suddenly cut off and carried to the Chambers of the Grave, to converse with Worms and Dust?

O let us not be like the rich Fool in the Gospel, who promis'd himself the Enjoyment of great Riches, and many Years of Happiness, when we see what became of his mighty Hopes, that very Night his Soul was requir'd of him, and Death fatally disappointed him of all his Expectations

he was forced to leave the Enjoyment of what he had flattered himself withal, to others; while his own Soul remained naked and comfortless. Let us then always bear in our Mind, to pray to God that we may be continually on the Watch, so as when the Hour of Death comes, we may be readily prepared to embrace it, and go along with the Messenger chearfully, that is sent to convey us out of Time into Eternity, and put an End and Ease to all Troubles and Afflictions of this Life; that rising again from the Dust, we may behold the glorious Majesty of God surrounded with the holy Army of Martyrs, and all the blessed Angels, and so sing and rejoyce exceedingly, that we are redeemed from the Earth, and shall dye no more, but to pass on, and entering the heavenly Mansions, taste of endless Mercy.

Therefore, my Beloved, seeing we look for these things, let us be diligent in preparing to dye well, and so carry ourselves in all godly and honest Conversation, that we may be found of God pure, spotless and blameless. Therefore let us, with St. *Paul*, labour abundantly whilst

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we live on Earth, that in the last Day we may be found white as the Snow of *Salmon*, and not fail to be cloathed in the rich Robes of Christ's Righteousness, by which means we may surely pass to the Throne of God, and see him Face to Face in his full Glory as he is.

Let us not then put off these Thoughts of the Day of Death, as *Felix* did St. *Paul*, saying, *I will hear thee another Time.* It is laid to the Charge of *Jerusalem*, that it remembred not its latter End; and our Saviour wept over it, because it would not believe and in Time repent; for which, not considering the Things that belonged to its Peace, they were hidden from its Eyes: Delays in this Case are dangerous, because our Time on Earth is altogether uncertain, and upon these few uncertain Moments that we live, hang all that we can expect hereafter, for either they purchase to us eternal Life or eternal Death. Let us therefore always remember our latter End and leave Sin, that Sin may not leave us in the Grave; for if it does, a severe Judgment will take hold on us at the Resurrection, and fill us with Horror, Trembling and Amazement.

I grant that Death is naturally terrible to all, because it is opposite to Life; and we cannot by Nature be able to bear the Pangs of Death well, until we are schooled and instructed by sundry Tryals in this Life. Our sincere Conversation before Death approaches ought to appear,

First, In the Examination of our Hearts and Ways.

Secondly, In the Confession of our Sins and manifold Transgressions which we from Day to Day have committed; and all the Good we have omitted which was in our Power to have done, and then also seriously reflect that God is just in his Judgment. And,

Thirdly, In begging Pardon with unfeigned Sighs and Groans of the Spirit, that so we may be reconcil'd to God in Jesus Christ; and then, whether we live or die we are the Lord's: Nay, even a Man in a dying State, ought by no means so much to fix his Thoughts upon the Pangs of Death, or the Violence of his Disease, or that he is suddenly to depart hence and leave a World wherein he has spent many Years with his Wife, Friends, Children, (or Friend) as on the blessed Estate

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of that eternal Life, to which he is hasting his Journey; for even in his last Agonies it is his main Business to fix his Eye upon this by Faith in Jesus Christ.

O let us present our Souls to God with cheerfulness even in our dying State, that so they may pass with Joy into the happy and blessed State of Life to come, without any Weight of Fears or Doubts to encumber them; and not look back upon the World as we are going out of it, lest God look on it as he did on the Disobedience of *Lot*'s Wife going out of *Sodom* about to be destroyed; lest he should impute our Longings after the World a neglect of his Favours he is about to bestow on us, more valuable than Ten Thousand Worlds: But rather, as I said, willingly (without turning to the Right Hand or to the Left) resign our Souls into the Hands of the all-powerful and all-wise Creator of them, stedfastly believing that he can and will receive them into Heaven. C

Obedience, saith the Holy Father, *is one of the first Steps to Heaven, and a cheerful Resignation to the Will of God carries us yet higher; and to die in Obedience, is to be willing and ready to go out of the World when*

God

God calls us; as in *Rom.* 14. 7, 8. viz. *None of us liveth to himself, and no Man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; therefore whether we live or die we are the Lord's.*

These words instruct us, that in the very Hour when the Pangs of Death are upon us, we should chearfully resign ourselves to the Will and Pleasure of Almighty God, who first breathed into us the Breath of Life and made us to live, move and have a Being upon Earth. Holy *David* very well minded this, when he said, *Into thy Hands I commend my Spirit, thou hast redeemed it, O Lord God of Truth.*

We must not then fear Death at all; and the Reasons I shall give, are briefly these;

First, In all our care we have occasion to shew our Obedience to Almighty God.

Secondly, All future Sin is prevented by Death, for there is no Remembrance in the Grave whether we go; and St. *Paul* saith, *That the last Thing which shall be destroyed is Death*; whereby it is signified, that Death hath no more Power over our Bodies.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Our Bodies by dying here, are brought to a better and far more happy Estate, as being insensible of the many Miseries and Afflictions they endure whilst Life remains, and cease to be any more actively or passively instrumental in Sin or Defilement.

Fourthly, Death opens the Prison of the Soul, and gives it a free Passage to Cœlestial Glory, where it shall have the Vision and Fruitions of God the Father, who is our Creator; and the Society of God the Son, who is our Redeemer and Advocate; and the Company of God the Holy Spirit, who hath sanctified us; where Sorrow is never known, all Sadness banish'd, and evil Success never fear'd.

Then what remains but that we put off the Fears of Death, when Death it self will so befriend us? But that we may do this chearfully, and with a constant Mind, let us pray, that the Lord of his infinite Mercy would correct our present Sinfulness, and build up our further Knowledge to him, and direct our future Frailty, that we may earnestly desire, that we may advisedly search, truly know, and perfectly fulfil all things pleasing to him, that the ever-

living

living God may give us a blessing of Peace and Joy in his holy Habitation, when these things we now behold shall pass away, and be no more, where we shall not fail to walk uprightly in his Ways, and truly in his Love, to our endless Comfort and his Glory, remaining in a State of Perfection unalterable, and not to be exterminated; there obtaining all we look for, wish, or desire, and be crowned with a beautiful Diadem of everlasting Life and Glory, out-shining all sublunary things; then it is that we shall account every thing in this World as Drois and Dung, in comparison to what we shall there enjoy.

The Consideration of this ought to raise our Souls inflam'd with divine Love, far above the Level of this World; and give 'em the Wings of an Eagle, that they may flie up to Heaven in Contemplation of those Joys they sigh and languish for, in this Vale of Tears; and by Faith stedfastly to behold their Blessed Redeemer, sitting at the right Hand of God the Father making Intercession, and obtaining for them Crowns of Life, immortal Glory.

O that therefore Men would Praise the Lord, who in his infinite Mercy does such wonderful Things for the Children of Men! Things beyond all the Expression of Words, or even the Utterance of Men or Angels! For no Tongue can express the Happiness prepared in Heaven for those that love and fear the Lord; which unspeakable Happiness, may we all possess in Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

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FINIS.

Christ the Spouse of the Church;

OR, A

FOLD

FOR

Christ's SHEEP:

In Two Sermons on the First Chapter of *Canticles*, Verse 7, 8.

Shew me (O thou, whom my Soul loveth) where thou feedest, and where thou liest at Noon; for why should I be as she that turneth aside to the Flocks of thy Companions?

If thou know not, O thou Fairest among Women, get thee forth by the Steps of the Flock, and feed thy Kids by the Tents of the Shepherds.

NOW having delivered my Text, before I enter upon it, it will be requisite for my better Method of Proceeding and your Understanding, to say some Thing by the Way concerning the Order of rightly placing this Book, the Title of it, the Subject, and the Matter contained in it. As

As for the Order; as there were three Degrees in the Material Temple, he built the first for the People, the second for the Priests and Levites, and the third the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, or the *Holiest of Holiest*, into which it was lawful only for the High Priest to enter, and that but once a Year: So in his erecting a Spiritual Temple, for the Good of Mens Souls, he observes the same Order. In his Book of *Proverbs*, easy to be understood by the People: In his *Ecclesiastes*, leading on further in the Way of Godliness. And lastly, in his excellent Book of *Canticles*, wherein none but those that delight in heavenly Mysteries can enter with Understanding, it being a Revelation of the sacred Mysteries communicable between Christ and his Spouse, the Church; with his exceeding Love expressed towards her, and every faithful Soul that is a Member of her. Also the Church's Love towards him; and what great and Queen-like Benefits she shall reap by him, who is her Head, her Lord, and her Ruler.

Secondly, As for the Title of this Book, it is the *Song of Songs*, the most exalted of the Kind, both in Matter and Stile, live-

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ly describing to us the most holy and perfect Love Christ Jesus has towards his beloved Spouse the Church? And thus having open'd the Matters, I proceed to the Handling of my Text, And, *First*, in relation to these Words,

Shew me, O thou, whom my Soul loveth, &c.

I find in the beginning of this Chapter, the Church speaking to Christ, in the most loving and passionate manner, desiring earnestly to embrace him, and be joyned with him; preferring him, with the Blessing and Benefits she received by him, before all the valuable things in the World.

I find her also, in the third Verse, expressing her Unworthiness and Deficiency of Power to embrace him, intreating him to draw her to him by the Power of his Holy Spirit and Word, shewing her earnestness to receive him, above all things to be joyned with him. And in the 4th Verse, she leaves not off, tho' acknowledging her Deformity, till in the end, being cloathed with Christ's Righteousness, decked and beautified with the Graces of his Spirit, Knowledge, Faith, Repentance,

Zeal,

Zeal, Patience, Love, Obedience, *&c.* she is Fair and Comely, and a meet Spouse for him whom her Soul loveth; and so leaves not off, till she has a Freedom to put up her earnest Request, That he would shew her where his Flocks feed, and where he provides Comfort for them in time of Trouble: For he being the great Bishop and Shepherd of our Souls, his Church Militant seeks only to him to feed it, assuredly confiding, that there is but one true Shepherd who feedeth his Sheep in the green and flourishing Pasture of Righteousness.

Now in these Matters referring to the Text, there are two things principally to be considered: *First*, The Petition and Request made by the Church unto Christ. *Secondly*, The suitable Answer, in the most kind and loving manner, returned by Christ to her.

As to the *First*, Two things are required to be considered, *viz. The Petition*, and *the Reason why the Church Petitions.*

In the Request, it is to be observed, the Person is noted whom she implores, *O thou, whom my Soul loveth*, &c. Then the Request it self, being a two fold Request.

First,

First, That Christ would shew, her where he feeds his Flocks with the sincere Milk of the holy Sacraments, to the intent that he would feed her as he did his Flocks of Old.

Secondly, Her Petition is to know where he provides Shelter for his Flocks in the time of Distress, and where he covers them from the scorching Heat of Persecution? And, *Lastly*, she reasons thus, *For why should I be as she that turneth aside after the Flocks of thy Companions*?

Again, The Person here sought after to direct and comfort the Church, is *Christ*; whom he describeth in these Words, *O thou, whom my Soul loveth*, &c. which Love far exceedeth all other Love, and is the best in the World.

Now from these Matters we may learn that every Child of God, and true Believer in Christ, must love him with the most ardent and passionate Affections that the Soul of Man can be capable of; with a Love that enflames the Heart to divine Raptures, breathing affectionate Desires to be in all things obedient to his Will, and united to him; for if any thing be belov'd above him, or in any degree comparable

parable to him, our Love is vain and not acceptable: He requires the *whole* Heart, when he says, *My Son, give me thy Heart*, and will admit of no Rival in his Love: And therefore, all that will partake of his divine Love, must unfeignedly (from the Bottom of their Hearts) say, *O thou whom my Soul loveth*; and breathe and pant after him with *Longings* and *holy Desires*, that he may return them Love again, and open his Arms to embrace 'em with a tender Affection. Nay, so earnest was the Love of the Church towards Christ, that abounding to Excess, she cries out, *Stay me with Flaggons, and comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of Love*, Cant. 2. 5. And St. *Peter* being asked the Question, vehemently expressed himself, and said, *Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee*, John 21. 15.

Now the *Reasons* are divers to set forth with what an ardent Affection we must love Christ: And *First*, We must do it because he is our Spouse, for so the Prophet *Isaiah* saith, *viz. He that made thee is thy Husband, whose Name is the Lord of Hosts*; and in another Place 'tis said, *Let us rejoice, and give Glory to him, for the Marri-*

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age of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made her self ready. Now the ſpiritual Service and Worſhip we pay to God, is in a Condition the Marriage of our Souls to Chriſt, and when we take upon our ſelves the Chriſtian Profeſſion in Baptiſm, then we betroth our ſelves to him as to a glorious Husband, entering into a ſtrict Covenant with him to keep only to him unto the End of our Lives; and tho' Death may, and does frequently ſeperate other Husbands and Wifes, yet if we do this, we ſhall never have a Seperation from Chriſt Jeſus, but he will provide royal and magnificent Eſpouſals for our Souls cloſely united to himſelf, feeding us here as his Flock, and hereafter providing for us eternal Habitations to lie down at eaſe by the Well-ſpring of Life, and live and reign with him from everlaſting to everlaſting.

A ſecond Reaſon why we ſhould love Chriſt entire, is becauſe he obliges us to it by loving us firſt and beſt, as St. *John* ſays, *We love him becauſe he loved us firſt*, John 4. 2. Yea, even he loved us when we were his Enemies, and in meer Compaſſion to us, gave himſelf for us as a Ranſom

ſome to redeem us; that we might Love him, he endur'd for us Poverty, Diſtreſs, Scorn, Abuſes, Stripes, and even Death it ſelf; proving thereby his Love towards us, to be *ſtronger* than *Death*, whoſe Bands he broke aſunder, ſo that he could not be holden of Death in the Grave, from glorioufly riſing to aſcend on high, and draw us after him with the Cords of his Love; Nay, ſo great is his Love towards us, that ſitting at the right Hand of his Father in Heaven, he makes continual Interceſſion for us, and ſtays the Hand of his Juſtice in Mercy, from executing Vengeance on us for our evil Deeds, cauſing the Almighty to be of long Patience, Suffering, Forbearance towards us, that we may ſee the Error of our Ways and Doings, and repent us of our Sins; that ſo we dying may riſe in a glorious Reſurrection, and poſſeſs the Manſions he has prepared for us in the higheſt Heavens.

Now what can any one ſo much as imagine could move Chriſt to give himſelf to Death, and by dying, procure ſo many Benefits for us, only his exceeding Love towards us? Surely nothing that is in us but God, who is rich in Mercy, through his

great Love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickened us together by Christ, by whose Grace ye are saved, *Ephes.* 1. 15. And again, Hereby have we perceived his Love, that he laid down his Life for us. By whom, saith the Apostle St *Paul*, we have received Redemption by his Blood, *Ephes.* 1. 17. Therefore the Love that Christ Jesus hath first shewed to us, must needs constrain us to love him again.

Nay yet more, because he is in himself most lovely and amiable, and in himself most excellent, above all things to be desired, as the fittest Object of our choicest Love, and the most worthy of our highest Respects: For as the Church says truly, *My Beloved is White and Ruddy, the Chiefest among ten thousand.* And in another place he is said to be *Fairer than the Children of Men.* We see evidently in the World, Beauty, Riches and Honour take much to draw Love and Affection to them, which, in regard to Christ, are but Trifles, and as nothing, who in himself is more Beautiful, Rich and Glorious than all the Myriads of Angels, the least of which exceeds all this World's Beauty united in one

Person

Person. For Wisdom, Christ is the Fountain; for Truth, he is the Author; for Mercy, he is the Store-house of all Mercies; for Riches he is the Lord of Heaven and Earth, of Men and Angels; and for Beauty, he is the most holy blessed Son of God, shining in Grace and Truth. And St. *John* tells us, when he saw him in his Vision, *His Countenance out-shone the Brightness of the Sun.* And to conclude this Particular, He is all Things lovely and desirable that the Soul of Man can wish to delight in, and therefore above all Things should be beloved, who is worthy to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power, and Praise and Dominion, both now and for ever more.

What then can we prefer to him that is worthy of our Love, in the least Comparison? And how sadly do we see, for a little earthly Dross, many reject him, making their Riches their God, and doting upon perishing Things? Nay, even we see those that own him for the glorious Spouse, break Covenant with him, and follow fleshly Lusts, which takes off their Love and Affections to spiritual Things: They outwardly pretend indeed to love

the Lord Jesus Christ, but in their Works they not only deny him but despise him, *and will not have this Man to rule over them.* And how can these imagine, that Christ will take it at their Hands, who, as it were, sell their Love to him for a *Morsel of Bread?* Surely he will withdraw the Light of his amiable *Countenance* from them, and cease to shine with his Grace on their Hearts; so shall they be left in Darkness and the Shaddow of Death, to stumble on dark Mountains, and lose their Way to the *Heavenly Canaan* for robbing him of that Love and Respect that is due to him, and give his Honour to another, even to Sin and Satan. For in this they also grieve the *Holy Spirit* that should seal them to the Day of Redemption, and walk in the Gain-saying of *Corah*, in despising the Riches of Christ's Grace, and breaking their Baptismal Vows in forsaking him.

How then shall such as now reject his Love be able to look him in the Face, when he shall come in Flames of Fire, accompanied with Ten Thousand of his Saints and Angels, to render Vengeance on ungodly Sinners, and convince all Gain-sayers? O let us think of this betimes, and not be luke-

lukewarm on our Love towards him. Let us *kiss the Son least he be angry*; and we that now refuse to meet his Love, Wooing and inviting us, be forced to meet his Fury and Indignation, when he comes to judge the World.

St. *Paul*'s Love we find was so fervent, that he *accounted all Things but Dross and Dung, in comparison of the Love of Christ*; and this made him desire earnestly to *be dissolved and be with Christ*, who was the Hope and Center of all his expected Felicity in the other World.

Again, If we love Christ Jesus with all our Hearts, we shall not fail to love those whom he loves: For St. *John* says, *We know that we are translated from Darkness to Light, because we love the Brethren*, 1 John 3. And *David* says, *All his Delight is in the Saints of God.* So that we find it is our Duty to love Christ's blessed Members which are all true Christians, with a peculiar and special Love; as their being the Heirs of Christ, and Members of one Body with us; for those that do otherwise, are not in Christ, but in the Love of the World. But to such as have their perfect Love, Christ says, *But because I have chosen*

you out of the World, therefore the World hateth you, John 19.

It's another Mark of our Love to Christ, when we are obedient to his Word and holy Laws: For he says, *If you love me, keep my Commandments.* And again, If we Love him with an *entire Affection*, we cannot at any Time endure to hear him blasphemed, or his Word contemned, or ridiculed, or his Sabboth prophan'd, but such Things grieve us to the Heart, and we will not fail to defend his Cause to the utmost of our Power, as a loving Child will do that of his Father, and a faithful Servant to the Credit of his Master: And moreover, it will cause us to endure Tryal and Persecution for his Sake, even loss of Liberty, Riches, and all Things this World values most, yea Life it self; because he so loved us, that he laid down his Life for us.

And thus much may suffice for the Love of the Church to Christ; and in the next Place, I come to speak of the Church's Petition to her beloved Spouse.

Shew

Shew me, O thou whom my Soul loveth, where thou feedest, &c.

Here the Church compares Christ to a faithful Shepherd, in Imitation of the Prophet *Isaiah*, when he says, *He will gather together his Lambs*, Isa. 40. And also *Ezekiel* says, *Behold I will require my Flock of the Shepherds; and I my self will feed my Sheep, and cause them to rest at quiet*, Ezek. 34. And this is further testified by *David*, when he says, *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want*, Psal. 23. 1. Yea, Christ calls himself so, when he says, *I am the good Shepherd*, &c. John 10. 11.

To this Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls, the Church put up her earnest Petition, in the humblest and most devout manner, That he would be pleased to tell her where he feeds his Flocks with the preaching of his Word, and the Use of his Sacraments, that she may joyn with them and be fed and comforted. For tho' the Church of Christ is but one, yet has it many *Parts*; for we find St. *John* commanded to write to the several Churches of *Asia*: So that one Part may be in Afflicti-

on and Persecution, and the other, at the same time, be in the Rest and Ease, and this cause moves the Petition. She desires to know where he feeds his Sheep in Peace and Quiet, where the Word is truly preached, and the Sacrament duly administred, and the Discipline exactly performed, that she might join with them in the Service of God.

By this Petition we find it is a true Mark of those that are *Christ's Sheep*, that they hunger and thirst after his Word, earnestly enquiring, and diligently seeking where he feeds his Flock, and such as they know him, and are known of him; for he says, *My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them, and they follow me; but the Voice of a Stranger will they not hear*, John 10. 2. *David* was mighty earnest in seeking after God; for the Meditation on him, made him cry out, *O how aimable are thy Tabernacles? How doth my Soul long after thy Altar? O when shall I come and appear before the Lord in Sion?* Even so should every Christian have longing Desires, nay, Hunger and Thirst after Christ, in the Spirit, as the Body hungers and thirsts after Nourishment to refresh it; for the Word of

of God is the Food and Nourishment of the Soul; and those that hunger not after it, but rather after the Things of this World, starve and pine their Souls to Death, even the second Death, which is the most terrible and amazing of all. And this is the sad Carelesness of too many who strive to pamper their Bodies, but are regardless of taking in spiritual Food for the Nourishment of their Souls: For seeing there are but a very few that hunger after the Word of God, or esteem of it, it plainly shews that they are insensible of their Souls want of spiritual Food, and know not the wretched and miserable Estate they are in by such a Neglect, which lays them open to Temptations that draws them insensibly into Sin, by joyning themselves to Evil, regardless and negligent Companions, never so much as reflecting upon themselves, to say so much as, What have I done? much less having any Desire or Longing for *the sincere Milk of the Word*, to refresh and nourish their fainting Souls; not in the least panting after it, *as the Hart doth after the Water-Brook*, nor as the Church doth here, *viz. Shew me where thou feedest thy Flock*, &c.

And certainly till we are sensible of our great Wants, we cannot truly make this Petition, no more than a Beggar that is full can earnestly crave Food; for not being a hungry, he regardeth it not, but when he is, and is sensible of his Wants, dictated by his craving Stomach, he will spare neither Words nor Labour to supply his Necessities.

Those that suppose themselves happy, because they feel no want, are ever the most likely to fall into it; because their supposed Plenty renders them supine and negligent to recruit their wasting Stores: So even 'tis with a Sinner, whose Sins have so far blinded him, that he is not capable of seeing the Want of Grace and Mercy he stands in need of, to comfort his Soul in the great and terrible Day of the Lord; when for refusing the Love of Christ, now so freely offer'd, he will meet with his just Anger, and fiery Indignation; hearing him say, *I know you not, depart from me all ye Workers of Iniquity*: For he that refuses him, or denies him before Men, shall be deny'd, or not own'd by him before his Father which is in Heaven.

Now the Reason we do not hunger, nor thirst

thirſt after the Word of God; is, becauſe we know not aright how to value it, not well conſider it is the *Bread and Water of Life*, and without it we can never enjoy the Variety of all thoſe good Things that are treaſured up in it to make us truly happy; ſeeing even all the good Things we enjoy in this Life, are only appearances or appendances to the Word of God, by which Word and the Lord's Prayer they are ſanctified to us, and no otherwiſe can it redound to their Comfort and Satisfaction, than by hungering and thirſting after it; for as the bleſſed Virgin expreſſes it, *He filleth the Hungry with good Things, and the Rich he ſends empty away*, Luke 1. 43. By the Rich here, are meant thoſe that think they are full and want nothing, when indeed they are in the greateſt *Want* of all, as wanting the comfortable Application of God's Word to their Souls, for want of which, the Soul is hungry and pines away, whilſt thoſe that hunger after it, have their Souls filled and ſatisfied with all good Things in this Life, and lay up a Store of endleſs Bleſſings in the Life to come. For as *Solomon* tells us, *The Perſon that is full, deſpiſeth the Honey-comb; but to the hungry*

gry Soul, every bitter Thing is sweet; so when we shall come to a Sense of our *Spiritual Poverty*, by reason we are distitute of God's Word rightly apply'd to our Hearts, it should (one would think) make us highly prize and value it as the only Thing that can supply our Wants, and make us rich in the Abundance of all good Things, held fourth to us in the Benefits that accure in hearing it preached to us, and diligently reading and well digesting of it to our Comfort.

Now seeing this Longing after the Word, that Christ hath left us as a sure Rule and Guide is an infallible Mark that we are of his Fold, and that he is our Shepherd; we ought above all Things to be very careful to gain such a Badge as may distinguish us from the Goats, who will not be admitted into the Number of his Sheep, but altogether be excluded his Flock, and turned over to the *ravenous Wolf*, which is *Satan* standing ready to devour them in endless Misery; to which, together with himself they are destined because they loathed the Word of God, and hated the Preaching of it; and as *Ezekiel* says, *They tread down the Pasture*

of

of the Sheep; never enquiring where Christ feeds his Sheep; or if they do, it is to evil Ends, *viz.* To vex and trouble them by reproaching the Word of God, and endeavouring to make it a Scandal and By-word; being such as the Prophet *Malachy* notes, who wickedly say in their Hearts, *It is lost Labour to serve the Lord: And what Good cometh there by serving of God?* O let such be warn'd betimes, that if they look to have any Comfort in Death and at the Day of Judgment, they now labour to be approv'd for Sheep of the Fold of Christ, and not to follow vain Notions, which cannot profit them; for if the Blind lead the Blind both shall fall into a Ditch.

And the Reason why they should be marked to be known that they belong to Christ's Fold, and the which serves likewise for the *Confirmation* of this Point of Doctrine, is because the Work of Salvation is wholly and entirely wrought by him; nor is there any part thereof reserved to any Creature; none in *Heaven* nor *Earth* was found able or worthy to open this Book, or unloose the Seals thereof, but the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the

the World, it was his rich redeeming *Blood* alone that could purchase Salvation for us; and as the Apostle saith, *That among Men there is no other Name given under Heaven whereby we may be saved but Jesus Christ*, Heb. 1. And again, *That he is able perfectly to save them that come unto God by him.*

And thus much may serve to admonish all faithful Ministers of Jesus Christ, that they teach nothing but the Truth of God according to his revealed Word, not any Devices or Fancies of their own, as those of the *Romish* Church do; as also to admonish all Hearers to content themselves with the Pasture of God's Word, the plain and pure *Preaching* of it, and not be drawn away with new fangled Doctrine and Traditions of Men, to follow strange Shepherds that will lead them into the *Wilderness of Error*, as pretending God's Word no wholsome Pasture for his Sheep to feed on. And thus much for the Church's First Request, now follows the Second, *viz.*

And

And where thou causest them to lie down at Noon.

It is the Custom of the Eastern Shepherds, to whom *Solomon* alludes this Passage in my Text, to feed their Sheep in the Morning, and when the Sun waxeth hot, to drive them to cool shades for Refreshment, and the better Preservation of their Health.

So here the Church is inquisitive to know where Christ feeds his Flock, that is, his faithful People to find Shelter in the Heat of Persecution, even in the most dangerous and troublesome Tryal, and Times of greatest Extremity, meant here by Noon-day, when the Sun is most hot and scorching, according as our Saviour mentions, speaking of a Sort of evil Hearers, viz. *And when the Sun was up, they were scorched, and for want of Root, it withered away.*

And now from this we may observe a two-fold Instruction:

First, That sometimes the Church of Christ is the very Heat of Persecution. And,

Secondly,

Secondly, That Christ the good Shepherd even then forsakes not his Flock; but at Noon-day, even in their greatest Extremity, provides Shelter for them, where they are comforted and refreshed as in a pleasant Grove; so that it is evident that God suffers his Church sometimes to be persecuted, as St. *Paul* testifies when he says, *Whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer Persecution:* And *David* tells us, *Great are the Tribulations of the Righteous; but the Lord shall deliver them out of all:* And indeed, this *Persecution* began very early in the Church as a Tryal of Faith, Constancy and Patience in suffering; for in the Apostle's Time some were wrack'd, and would not be deliver'd that they might for dying for Christ receive a glorious Resurrection, and others were mock'd and scourg'd, cast into Bonds and Imprisonment, sawn asunder, slain by the Sword and Burned; others wandered up and down in Sheeps-Skins and Goats-Skins, being destitute, afflicted and tormented, whom the World was not worthy of. So that if we expect to live and reign with Christ in his *Church Trium-*

Triumphant, we must patiently suffer in the *Church Militant* on Earth; and for these *things* I proceed to give some *reasons*: And,

First, In regard of God's Enemies, who know not the Father, nor his Son Jesus Christ, and so are filled with Rage and Malice against all that live godly and uprightly in the World; as our Saviour witnesseth, when he saith, *They shall excommunicate ye, yea, the time shall come, that whoever killeth you, will think that he doth God Service; and these things they will do, because they know not the Father nor me*; So that it is no Wonder if the Enemies of God's Church, do strive against his faithful Servants, stirred up to it by the Malice of the Devil, seeing they know not God nor Jesus Christ.

Nay, *Secondly*, It may be observed, that God himself many times suffereth his Children to undergo some Trials of sharp and bitter Affliction, for he chastens every Son that he receives; and if ye bear not the Chastening of the Lord, ye are accounted Bastards and not Sons, and this is a Trial of their Faith and Patience, that when they are proved and found worthy, they may receive the greater Reward.

Another

Another Reason why he suffers them to be afflicted, is to humble them, least by over-much Prosperity, like *Jesurun*, they should grow fat and kick; and that being afflicted, they should lift up their Eyes to the Hills, from whence their Help cometh, and not be puffed up with Pride, or rely on their own Strength, which cannot avail them.

As for the Use we ought to make of this Affliction, it is to give us a true Sense of our Sins, whereby we have offended God, and caused him to make us suffer; that, like Prodigals strayed from him, we might return again to his House, and be sheltered from the scorching Heat? and thus he hides his Face for a time, that he may return with greater Loving-kindness. And so passing on, I come to the 8th Verse, which is Christ's Answer and Direction to the Church, *viz.*

If thou knowest not, O thou Fairest among Women; get thee by the Steps of the Flock, and feed the Kids in the Tents of the Shepherds.

We have already heard the earnest Request of the Church, that he would in Mercy shew her where he feeds his Flock, and refresh them in time of Trouble, to which

which he here gives a very kind and obliging Answer; which shews,

First, His Love and tender Regard to her; calling her *The Fairest among Women.*

Secondly, He gently reproves her, *viz. If thou know not*, &c. which is as much as to say, It is a very strange Thing that the true Church should not know where Christ her Shepherd feeds his Flock.

Thirdly, He shapes his Answer to her Request, viz. *Thou must go by the Steps of the Flock*; that is, by the Direction and Guidance of the Word of God, which leads to all Truth, even in the Steps of the Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles, in their Faith, Religion, Worship and Service of God, bating the Ceremonial Part of the *Jewish* Church. And in doing this, he adds Titles and Ornaments of Beauty to her; calling her *The Rose of the Field, the Lilly of the Valley, the Fairest among Women, an Orchard of Pomgranates, a Garden of Fountains, a Well-spring of Water, the Spouse and Sister of Christ, the Beauty of the Earth, the Glory of the World, the Lilly among Thorns*, &c.

By

By this we may find, how dear and precious the Church is in the Sight of Christ her beloved Spouse; he esteems highly of her, and she is most excellent in her self, because in the Church alone Salvation is to be found.

As for the Use of those Things, let us consider how gracious and merciful Christ is to pass over her Weakness and Failings, and calls her the Fairest among Women; tho' a little before she confesses her self to be black and deform'd: Now she is Comely in his Sight, and more Beautiful than the Lilly or unsullied Rose.

And further, from this Answer we may learn a clear Direction to know true Religion and the true Worship of God, from the false Religion and false Worship; for if any one is desirous to know where he feeds his Sheep, and where God is truly worshipped, and true Religion is; he must tread in the Steps of the Sheep; that is, worship God as *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* did, as *Moses* and the Prophets did, &c. believe, repent and walk with God as *Enoch* did, whom by the Judgment of Faith, we may conclude of to be the true Sheep of Christ's Fold, whom he

he preserv'd here, and will everlastingly preserve to their endless Comfort in a blessed State. For thus saith the Lord, *Stand in the Ways and behold, ask for the old Way, which is the good Way, and walk therein, and you shall find Peace and Rest for your Souls.*

Let us all then be confin'd, and stand stedfast in this Way, and not turn aside to the Right Hand or to the Left, and so Christ by his Spirit shall lead us in it Step by Step, till at length we shall arrive at the End of our Journey, even to joyn with the Church Triumphant in Heaven, and sing Praises and Hallelujahs to him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever.

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Let us tread in the Steps of the Sheep, feed in the Tents of the Shepherds. Let us live and die in the true Church of God, and for ever embrace and hold fast the true antient and holy Religion, received from the Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles, and then we need not fear a glorious Resurrection, and to stand with Joy before the great Shepherd, in the Day of Judgment, and be happy and blessed for evermore. *Amen.*

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